

Editorial: TU leaders must fight for needs budgets! No Cuts; Build the Rank and File fightback!



The Counihan Homelessness Campaign In Kilburn Square fighting Brent Council's attempt to drive the family out of Brent

Contents

Page 2: Editorial: TU leaders must fight for needs budgets!

Page 4: 200,000 March against Austerity in London, By Graham Durham.

Page 5: The Third Grand Old Duke of York Demo: TU leaders must fight for needs budgets!, GRL flyer for TUC demo.

Page 6: The Counihan Campaign and the Housing Crisis By Gerry Downing.

Page 7: The true role of the National Shop Stewards Network, By Laurence Humphries.

Page 8: 28 EIS workers sacked on Crossrail project..... So we fight back! By CR+F.

Page 9: The Truth about Hillsborough, By Roy Bentham.

Page 12: The Anti-Fascist Network, By John Beirne.

Page 13: List Of Irish Republican POWs, IRPSG.

Page 14: Plebgate, experts and the prosecution service, By Michael Holden.

Page 15: Statement by the Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group, Letter to the Irish Post, From Charlie Walsh.

Page 16: Lights and Shadows from Fifty Shades of Grey, By Aggie McCallum.

Page 17: Jim Fixed it for the Ruling Class Child Abusers, By Antonio Las Sogas & Brigid O'Duinn.

Page 18: Tree planting ceremony for Terence MacSwiney (1879-1920), Lord Mayor of Cork, By Austin Harney.

Page 19: The Basque Country – fracture point?, By Cormac Mac Gall.

Page 21: US election, By John Leslie and Wayne DeLuca.

Page 22: Police brutality incident exposes the role of cops under capitalism, by John Leslie.

Page 23: Letters pages.

Page 25: 'Liberation' in Libya today, By the Liaison Committee of the Fourth International.

Page 29: Refutation of Prof. Grover Furr By Mike Ely and Socialist Fight.

Page 32: The True Levellers or Diggers By Laurence Humphries

Page 33: Defend the DSM of South Africa.

Page 34: Socialist Fight: For an International Solidarity Campaign with the striking mineworkers of South Africa.

Page 35: Solidarity with Marikana Miners, By Ailish Dease.

Page 36: Facebook debate on the class nature of Stalin's "counterrevolutionary workers' state".

Page 39: COMMUNIST UNIVERSITY 2012.

By Laurence Humphries and Gerry Downing

Page 40: International day of action, Letter to the Irish Post, IRPSG to visit Derry for Bloody Sunday 2013.

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Unity is strength, L'union fait la force, Es la unidad fuerza, Η ενότητα είναι δύναμη, .. اتحاد قوت است, đoàn kết là sức mạnh, Jedność jest siła, ykseys on kesto, युनिटि श्रु नः, Midnimo iyo waa awood, hundeb ydy chryfder, Einheit ist Stärke, एकता शक्ति है, единство наша сила, vienybės jėga, bashkimi ben fuqine, ЛІТНА НОД, unità è la resistenza, 団結は力だ, A unidade é a força, eining er styrkur, De eenheid is de sterkte, الوحدة هو القوة, Ní neart go chur le céile, pagkakaisa ay kalakasan, jednota je síla, 일성은 이다 힘, Workers of the World Unite!

TU leaders must fight for needs budgets! No Cuts; Build the Rank and File fightback!

Editorial

The Greek and European sovereign debt crisis continues to worsen, several countries in the Euro area cannot repay or re-finance their government debt without the assistance of the dreaded troika, the IMF, EU and ECB. This sovereign debt crisis is threatening the solvency of whole nations and the survival of the Euro and the European Union itself.

This has had dire consequences for the Greek working class and poor, the fascist Golden Dawn is advancing, food kitchens have sprung up and real poverty and hunger has begun to reappear in Europe for the first time since the end of WWII. Greece shows us all our futures under this rotten and crisis-ridden global capitalist system.

Labour's "cuts too far too fast"

Chancellor Ed Balls told the Guardian, *"The public want to know that we are going to be ruthless and disciplined in how we go about public spending"*. And at the Labour Conference, *"we cannot make any commitments now that the next Labour government will be able to reverse particular tax rises or spending cuts."*

The official leadership of the working class internationally are bureaucratised functionaries and career politicians who are dependent on the capitalist system itself for their privileged lifestyles. So their greatest fear is the mass movement of the working class which will threaten that lifestyle. We need a new revolutionary leadership.

Their strangle-hold on the Rank and File of the movement is stronger now than ever. They actively foster the two tier workforce to split and divide us. We saw this in Ellesmere Port, in the London buses and in countless other workplaces; new starters are second class TU members, with lower pay rates and far worse conditions.

Almost all left groups do not fight these sell-outs or prepare for the coming class war in any serious way. The National Shop Stewards Network, Unite the Resistance and the Coalition of Resistance cosy up to the left bureaucrats, from Crow to Serwotka, with Len McCluskey's treachery alibied and excused by all as the next platform 'prize'.

We desperately need a genuine Rank and File movement like the Grass Roots Left which

fight for the class independence of the working class not only in Britain but internationally. Central to this task is the fight to abolish the anti-union laws, the cover behind which TU bureaucrats hide their class-collaboration with the employers.

It is obvious a severe housing crisis is developing in Britain, the NHS is being totally privatised and local councils are about to be reduced to being the paymasters of privatised and decimated local services. Tory Barnett council is pioneering for the rest a US-style total privatisation of all services.

To defend the working class locally we need to develop local campaigns like the Counihan Homelessness Campaign in Brent to become national campaigns demanding needs budgets and decent social housing for all.

The privatisation of the NHS is proceeding apace and local campaigns are tending to degenerate into 'Keep our A&E, cut theirs'. Hypocritical Tory and Lib-Dem councillors were allowed on the platform at a recent Hammersmith demo without challenge from 'revolutionaries'. Rival local campaigners ripped down posters for neighbouring campaigns in Charing Cross hospital, a patient reported. NHS TU militants must fight for needs budgets under workers' and users' control here too.

Internationalism

The striking miners of South Africa are the vanguard of the international proletariat. The brutal and pre-planned massacre of the 34 miners on 16th August is a sharp manifestation of the International crisis of capitalism. Every class conscious worker on the planet has a duty to support and work for the victory of these strikes because they are fighting not just for the future of the South African working class but for us all.

A great many of the ANC and NUM leaders have become multi-millionaires by serving the interests of Imperialist finance capital. Former NUM leaders like Cyril Ramaphosa, Kgalema Motlanthe, Gwede Mantashe and James Motlatsi have used their union positions to become exploiting capitalists themselves. The gap between rich and poor in South Africa is now even wider than in the days of apartheid and among the world's worst. The Marikana miners were massacred by Zuma's police to protect this path to obscene privilege for today's ANC leaders and the corrupt union leaders in Cosatu and the NUM.

These will not be condemned by the official



Duncan Aldred, chairman, Vauxhall Motors welcomes the deal that instituted a two-tier workforce at Ellesmere Port. He hailed the "groundbreaking" levels of flexibility and could require workers to work round the clock to meet production targets if necessary. Wages have been cut by almost half for new starters. Pension and health plans have been abolished. Unite's Len McCluskey was unrepentant: *"From a position of uncertainty earlier this year, there is now a potential for a future at the plant until 2020 and beyond. Importantly this move will also bring component supplier plants back into the UK, a development that strengthens our manufacturing base generally."* However, he said he recognised that Ellesmere Port's good news could spell bad news for other GM operations in Europe. So British jobs for British workers at any cost is his chauvinist anti-internationalist class-collaborationist outlook!

labour movements in South Africa or internationally or by former national liberation movements leaders like Ireland's Gerry Adams. These latter have become defenders of Imperialist privilege while former comrades like hold-out Republicans Marian Price, Martin Corey and Gerry McGeough are effectively interned and Republicans in Maghera are denied basic democratic rights and are strip searched and tortured because the state refuses to adhere to the Agreement of August 2010. Every former national liberation leader and corrupt trade union bureaucrat envies the 'good fortune' of the ANC and former NUM leaders and wants the same for themselves.

As the crisis deepens Imperialism goes to war against the semi-colonial nations like Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria with Iran next in line. This is revealing inter-Imperialist rivalries the like of which we saw before WWI and WWII. A whole swath of former leftist have supported these predatory wars and proxy wars. We fight for the Anti-Imperialist United Front to defeat all these attacks.

A Real Crisis

This is a real crisis of capitalism, it cannot be resolved by expanding debt and pushing for growth as the Keynesian reformist falsely promise. The question now is who pays for this crisis, the capitalist class or the working class? We must demand a steeply progressive wealth tax to pose the expropriation of the capitalist

class itself.

The TUC are to investigate the “practicalities” of holding a general strike. A one day would be only a protest to let off steam, as in Greece and Spain. We must fight for an indefinite General Strike to bring down the Con-Dem Coalition. Such a General Strike is objectively political. By its very nature it must pit class against class and pose the question of power. **And the TUC are certainly not ready for that!**

Only a revolutionary international, a reformed Fourth International, can fight for and win this.

Slogans for the International Fight

- **Build Rank and File movements in the TUs!**
- **Democratise the unions!**
- **Elections of all union officials!**
- **Officials to be paid no more than the average skilled worker's wage!**
- **Public works at TU rates of pay to give work to the unemployed!**
- **No to the two-tier workforce!**
- **Defeat the anti-union laws!**

- No to British
Jobs for British
Workers!**

- Forward to the International Solidarity of all the working class and oppressed!**

- Build a National Housing Campaign to fight for decent social housing for all!**

- Defend the NHS, no privatisation!

- **Nationalise the banks and major industries under the control of workers and working class communities!**

- **Open the books so committees of workers and consumers can determine where frauds and swindles have occurred.**

- **No to popular fronts with the political representatives of any capitalist class to 'defeat fascism', stop war or for any other reason.**



Striking miners in South Africa, the vanguard of the international proletariat, slaughtered by Zuma's ANC police force to defend the profits and privileges of the new black bourgeoisie, the white monopoly capitalists and the British, US and Chinese mining conglomerates.

- **No to sectarian abstention from the class struggle.**

- Release Irish, Palestinian, Naxalite, Tamil and all other anti-Imperialist POWs!

- For the Anti-Imperialist United Front to defeat predatory Imperialist wars!**

- For a steeply progressive wealth tax!

- For an indefinite General Strike to bring down the Con-Dem government!**

- Rebuild the Revolutionary International, the Trotskyist Fourth International!**

LABOUR REPRESENTATION COMMITTEE AGM
NO SURRENDER TO THE LABOUR CUTTERS!

The AGM of the LRC on 10 November will be debating the attitude the LRC believes Labour councillors should take in relation to implementing Tory imposed cuts in local government. The current position of the LRC that councillors should refuse to vote for cuts is under attack with a motion from Islington LRC calling for Labour councils to refuse to make cuts 'sooner or later'. The motion also praises so-called 'progressive' councils who, whilst implementing cuts, have pushed forward Living Wage deals.

Of course such a motion is to be expected by those Labour councillors who have fallen at the first hurdle of opposition to the Tories. In Islington, cosmetic measures such as a reduction in the Chief Executive salary are used to hide the £52 million cuts and over 500 jobs lost in Islington over the last two years. No mention that the Labour council called the police to evict protestors against these cuts from Islington Town Hall.

Of course the Living Wage is important – but it is not a compensation for job losses elsewhere. It is a classic divide and rule – buying off trade unions with a deal for those in work at the expense of increased unemployment as jobs in the Council and the voluntary sector are slashed. Nor is it a strategy that can be applied across the country – as many councils do not have the former inner-city funding reserves that inner-London Islington

has. Across the country front line services have been attacked by Labour councils with essential services to the severely affected. Encountering priorities are back for more with still to be made.

Most alarmingly for the LRC conference is that leading figures in the LRC are backing the Islington motion. Speaking at the recent National Committee, Andrew Fisher, joint national secretary, described what he believed are the two routes to opposing cuts – voting no and rallying opposition or implementing the cuts through the Islington Fairness Commission model. Other NC members support this position which seeks to provide an LRC cover for councillors implementing cuts

It is an insult to those Briefing supporters who fought Thatcher in the 1980s in Liverpool, Lambeth and elsewhere and were surcharged by the government for doing so – to have to revisit this cuts debate again. Councillors face no surcharges today – they would be free to campaign against any cuts imposed by government commissioners or other Tory agents. This is what happened in the 1980s and ultimately played a significant role in the defeat of Thatcher. In Brent, London where I was one of seven Labour councillors who refused to vote for cuts we campaigned against cuts in the local Fightback Campaign – occupying, for example, a respite care facility and two libraries – subsequently remained open for over 25 years.

This fighting spirit is increasingly reflected in the

wave of Labour councillors refusing to make cuts. Southampton Labour Councillors Against Cuts will be addressing the LRC conference – although, astonishingly, the LRC NC has invited the Islington Labour cutters to debate with them. The LRC must:

- Demand all Labour councillors refuse to vote for cuts in the 2013/14 budget round
- Call a national meeting of Labour councillors opposed to cuts
- Immediately to co-ordinate action
- Help build and support a national network of alliances/fightback campaigns to campaign against austerity and local cuts

Graham Durham, 4 November 2012

All socialists must ensure the defeat of the attempt.

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Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

200,000 March against Austerity in London 20 October

Support for 24 hour general strike growing

By Graham Durham, activist in UNITE and currently London Organiser of the Labour Representation Committee

Class Struggle

In a clear sign of the damage being inflicted on the working-class in Britain four national trade union leaders – Matt Wrack of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), Bob Crow of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Union (RMT), Len McCluskey of UNITE, the biggest trade union in Britain and Mark Serwotka of the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) – called on 20 October 2012 for the preparation of a 24 hour general strike in Britain to stop the austerity programme of the Tory/Liberal Democratic Coalition government. Such a strike would need to be a head-on challenge to the restrictive trade union laws introduced by Margaret Thatcher and never repealed by bosses friend, Tony Blair.

This follows a motion passed at the national trade union gathering, the Trades Union Congress, in September for such a strike to be planned. The outgoing TUC General Secretary, Brendan Barber, immediately poured cold water on the suggestion but support from four of the most militant union leaders means that the issue will not go away. The new TUC General Secretary, Frances O'Grady – the first ever woman leader of the TUC – will face increased Rank and File pressure to lead strike action to halt the savage attacks on all parts of the working class.

The huge turnout for the national marches in London, Glasgow and Belfast surprised most trade union and Labour Party leaders. Ed Miliband, Labour leader and reformist son and poor shadow of the late Marxist academic and activist Professor Ralph Miliband, was forced to attend the 20 October rally. He was loudly booed when he warned that any future Labour government would need to make cuts in the welfare state also but these would be slower.

Miliband had spelt out these plans to the Labour party conference in September when he sought to rebrand Labour as the party of One Nation. This attempt to hark back to the 19 Century Tory phrase of Disraeli – rampant capitalism and imperialist wars linked to tiny concessions to the emerging organised working –class – showed that Miliband was continuing the right-wing policies of Tony Blair's New Labour government of 1997-2010.

Talking with delegations from across the country on the 20 October march in London, it quickly became clear that every section of the organised working –class was under severe attack. Fire-fighters facing station closures and redundancies, local government workers facing privatisation, health workers facing hospital closures and privatisation (see Socialist Viewpoint Vol 12 No 3), – there was an endless list which, of course, reflects the same process occurring throughout the so-called advanced capitalist world in the USA and Europe.

Disabled activists, women's groups and campaigners for social housing and local services such as libraries all joined the march. Even the TUC affiliated Prison Officers Association and the high-paid top government-servants, the First Division Association, were present to voice their concerns over market penetration and pension reductions. In short British workers and the most vulnerable in society are facing exactly the same challenges as the working –class in Greece, Spain, Portugal and across the world from the United States to the capitalist slave labour factories of the east.

The left in Britain is in general active in support of a general strike demand. Some of the sectarianism of the past is reducing as revolutionary socialists work together in local and national campaigns. The largest two groupings identifying themselves as Trotskyist – the Socialist party (led by Peter Taaffe) and the Socialist Workers Party (from the tradition of the late Tony Cliff) both operate in classic party building style pouring scorn on those who work within the Labour Party.

The Socialist Party, in particular, has gained significant strength in some trade unions, particularly the PCS which organises amongst the lower paid and ranked central government civil servants. The Tories are, of course, targeting the PCS for restrictive legislation and seeking to reduce trade unions ability to organise through new legislation. There are a host of other smaller parties, including Socialist Resistance from the Mandel tradition.

The main left force operating inside the Labour Party – itself a unique party, social-democratic and a loyal servant to capitalism

but based on a funding and founding base of the main trade unions is the Labour Representation Committee (LRC).

Founded in 2004 it is grouped around the most class-conscious Member of Parliament, John McDonnell. Given the exodus of many socialists from the Labour Party as a result of the expulsion of small numbers of Militant tendency supporters during the Kinnock and Blair years (and the subsequent decision of Peter Taaffe and a majority of the Militant, now the Socialist Party, to leave Labour) and the revulsion at Tony Blair's support for the invasion of Iraq the left is a much smaller force than in the heyday of Tony Benn in the 1980s. The LRC is an alli-



No Cuts: "A clear class line of refusing to vote for cuts and organising the resistance is a key battleground at the LRC national conference on 10 November – without a clear class position of total opposition to making cuts the LRC would be in danger of being reduced to one of the many small magazines such as Tribune which campaign, in a half-hearted way, for a kinder capitalism".

ance of left and left centre social democrats and revolutionary socialists with the predictable tensions this provides – currently around the issue of what local Labour Party elected councillors should do faced with cuts imposed on local government by the Tory Coalition government. A clear class line of refusing to vote for cuts and organising the resistance is a key battleground at the LRC national conference on 10 November – without a clear class position of total opposition to making cuts the LRC would be in danger of being reduced to one of the many small magazines such as Tribune which campaign, in a half-hearted way, for a kinder capitalism.

The working-class needs a strong united left – seen to work together to battle for trade union rights, fight austerity and organise political opposition inside and outside the Labour Party. The demand for a 24 hour general strike, and its successful implementation, is the key to rebuilding class confidence and the most urgent task facing militants in Britain.

The Third Grand Old Duke of York Demo: TU leaders must fight for needs budgets!

GRL flyer for 20 October TUC demo



WE have seen only a fraction of the cuts to come first planned by Chancellor George Osborne in 2010—the total is almost £600 billion, and that is without the readjustments necessitated by the shrinkage of the economy and tax take due to these deflationary policies. So far less than 15% has been implemented.

What are the prospects of the official Labour movement leading a fightback against these vicious cuts? Even if Labour wins in 2015 it will continue these cuts without let-up. Shadow chancellor Ed Balls told the Guardian, *"The public want to know that we are going to be ruthless and disciplined in how we go about public spending"*. And at the Labour Conference, *"we cannot make any commitments now that the next Labour government will be able to reverse particular tax rises or spending cuts."*

And what are the intentions of the trade union and Labour council leaders, surely they will lead a fightback? They have no intention of doing so.

At a meeting with about fifty of its Councilors, including Council and Labour group leaders, on 12 November 2010 in Leeds, Unite newly elected General Secretary Len McCluskey got his deputy Gail Cartmell to instruct them to carry out all the cuts by setting legal budgets whilst hypocritically protesting. Not one balked at this disgraceful instruction. Not a single Labour councillor voted against the cuts imposed in April 2011, despite panic and soul-searching in Lambeth and Hackney. There was no question of setting 'needs budgets' to protect

the vulnerable against the cuts. Len McCluskey made his usual anti-cuts speech at this year's TUC but meekly acquiesced to the cuts agenda at the Labour party conference.

Back at the first 500, 000-strong 'Grand Old Duke of York' demo on 26 March 2011, just to make sure that he did not whip the troops into a revolutionary frenzy, McCluskey had Unite's stewards sporting the Ed Miliband slogan "cuts too far too fast" on their hi viz vests. What are the mobilising marching chants appropriate to this inspiring idea; "An injury to one is an injury to one and that's all, and that's all", "cut some not all, cut some not all" and, "cut their jobs, not our jobs, cut their jobs, not our jobs, do dah, dah do dah"? Bureaucrats save their fiery speeches for the big occasion to hide their sell-outs when no one is on the streets.

On 30 November 2011 we had the 'Grand Old Duke of York' one day Public Sector Pensions Strike. This saw a series of strikes over the whole of the UK. 60% of schools in England were closed and 6,000 hospital operations cancelled as up to two million public sector workers went on strike. Again a tokenistic series of protests, with no follow up to build the movement just as the Socialist party's "one day general strike" would become if not developed into an indefinite one.

The strangle-hold the TU bureaucracy has on the Rank and File of the movement is stronger now than ever. They actively foster the two tier workforce to split and divide us. We saw this in Ellesmere Port, in the London buses and in countless other workplaces; new starters are second class TU members, with lower pay rates and far worse conditions. Almost all left groups do not fight this in any serious way, thus they do not prepare for this impending catastrophe. The National Shop Stewards Network, Unite the Resistance and the Coalition of Resistance cosy up to bureaucrats, left and right, with Len McCluskey's treachery alibied and excused by all.

To begin the real fightback we must build a genuine Rank and File movement in the trade unions, which fights ALL the sell-out bureaucrats by the united front method; 'with them where possible, without and



The disgraceful Miliband slogan which Len McCluskey had Unite's stewards sporting on their hi viz vests on the first 500, 000 'Grand Old Duke of York' demo on 26 March 2011.

against them where necessary'. This is the task the Grass Roots Left has set itself. From the foregoing it is clear that we must also bring that fight into the Labour party to being to prepare for the 85% cuts to come and the inevitable political consequences of a Labour government viciously attacking its core supporters as Ramsey McDonald did in 1931.

Labour makes no promise to tax the rich, Balls has not even promised to reinstate the tokenistic 50p rate of tax. He was booed at the TUC promising to continuing the attack on the public sector. Given the dire consequences of the 15% cuts we have already seen the effect of the remaining 85% amount to the total destruction of the welfare state built up since 1945—the NHS privatised and local councils no more than paymasters for privatised and decimated services. This will inevitably split the Labour party, despite the apparent weakness of the left there and in TUs right now.

We must prepare for this by renewing the Labour movement, linking up with those within and outside the Labour party who want to fight. We begin with the core organised working class movement, the trade unions, and from there we must take the struggle into the Labour party. To do this we promote the principles and practices of the R+F in all our areas of work. These principles should include,

- a) Democratise the unions!
- b) elections of all union officials!
- c) Officials to be paid no more than the average skilled worker's wage!
- d) Defiance of the anti-union laws!
- e) A steeply progressive wealth tax!
- f) Public works at TU rates of pay to give work to the unemployed!

The Counihan Campaign and the Housing Crisis

By Gerry Downing

The fight of the Counihan-Sanchez family against homelessness has inspired all who have become involved with a spirit not seen since the late 1960s and early 70s. The Campaign that has built up around their struggle brings out the whole crisis of the capitalist system today. Initially, when the crisis struck them back in January, Leslie Ryan of the London Irish Advisory Centre performed Trojan labours on their behalf but the bureaucratic apparatus of Brent Council balked her. Antony Counihan then asked me for assistance to see if Unite the union would help. But I knew that a campaign was necessary to raise the political pressure on Brent Council so I contacted those who I knew would fight. Robin organised the first lobby of the council Executive and then Jimmy Mac appeared and took the Campaign by the scruff of the neck and the fight was on.

But as the mobilisations and lobbies of meetings and politicians developed it became clear that here was the whole housing crisis in all its awfulness. A homeless family of seven with children ranging from four to fifteen years old could not be given social housing and would not be given Housing Benefit to enable them to live in Brent if the council could help it.

The decades-long sale of council houses, the huge rents paid to the rackman landlords and the whole neo-liberal worship of the 'free market' had produced this very crisis. The awful advice from Glenda Jackson that they should go to Wales was absolutely repulsive and then the housing advice officer Rose McIntosh seriously proposed that Anthony, Isabel and the family move to the field that they inherited in Ireland and live in a caravan. She suggested that Anthony should not give up his job as a bus driver in Cricklewood as jobs were hard to get these days but he could "commute" (from Peterswell in Galway to London!).

Well now the family have put the land up for sale on the Council's urgings despite the fact that the council initially told them that doing so could constitute fraud because they would be "disposing of an asset to get a means-tested benefit".

But the Campaign now faces a crucial turning point. It must grow, it must reach out to mobilise the support of other workers who are facing similar housing and other serious problems. But there is a conflict about how to orient the Campaign. Should it orient towards the labour movement; the trade unions and the Labour party, and in what way? And if we do that are we not sowing false illusions in the Labour party, which always has and always will betray its working class followers? Is the Labour party just another capitalist party like the Tories and Lib-Dems (and the US Democrats)?

This dilemma has its political expressions in the forces centrally involved in the Campaign. These are the Revolutionary Communist Group, who are opposed in principle to working in the Labour party, and the Socialist party of England and Wales, who were deep entryist in the Labour party for decades as the Militant but who now say that the Labour party has changed its class character entirely and has become the equivalent of the Obama's US Democrats. Politically opposing this viewpoint is Robin, a former member of the AWL, which works inside the Labour party and the Socialist Fight group. We (the latter) take the view that the Labour party is still essentially the same as it was back in 1920 when Lenin analysed it as a bourgeois-workers party, that is it has a capitalist/Imperialist leadership but a working class base who vote for it and who are tied to it as a class via the trade union link. Today the trade unions provide something like 80% of funding for the party.

The family and their supporters on the South Kilburn estate take a more pragmatic view of all this politicising, which is quite sensible. They attended the launch of the Brent Labour Representation Committee on 30th October and there John McDonald MP agreed to read their case folder (Glenda Jackson their own MP had disgracefully refused to do this) and he has put down an Early Day Motion on their case in the House of Commons. The Labour Representation Committee has accepted affiliation of the Campaign and a motion will be moved at the 10th November AGM in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

Up to now the only MP to indicate support was Angie Bray, the Tory MP for Ealing Central and Acton and her support, we are sure, is only because Brent is Labour. We must be class conscious enough to recognise that the political direction of the Campaign must be towards the labour movement (the trade unions AND the Labour party) and in particular now towards the LCR AGM on 10th November where we will get some opposition for the 'caring cuts' mob but the appearance of the human face of these cuts and the political significance of what represents a revolt by their core supporters will help us win enormous support for the Counihan Campaign. We would be politically stoned at a Tory gathering! The presence of the Campaign will help us win the argument for 'NO CUTS' and 'NEEDS BUDGETS'. Just think of the futility of making such demands on the Tory or even on Lib-Dem grassroots meetings.

And what will we be arguing on November 10th? We will be saying that the only way to fight these cuts, which will devastate all our lives if we don't, is to form a united front of the solidarity of labour and proclaim the most essential and oldest principle of class solidarity,



The human face of the 'caring cuts' will speak at the AGM of the Labour Representation Committee on 10 November.

"an injury to one is an injury to all". That is we must reject contemptuously all the 'caring cuts' arguments and rally the whole class internationally in defence of each and every member, regardless of whether they are native born or recent immigrant.

Let us now tackle the 'caring cuts' argument by historical analogy. When the Duke of Monmouth was executed on Tower Hill on the 15 July, 1685, according to the History of England by Lord Macaulay, he accosted John Ketch the executioner and said,

"Here are six guineas for you. Do not hack me as you did my Lord Russell. I have heard that you struck him three or four times. My servant will give you some more gold if you do the work well." The first blow inflicted only a slight wound. The Duke struggled, rose from the block, and looked reproachfully at the executioner. The head sank down once more. The stroke was repeated again and again; but still the neck was not severed, and the body continued to move. Yells of rage and horror rose from the crowd. Ketch flung down the axe with a curse. 'I cannot do it,' he said; 'my heart fails me.' 'Take up the axe, man,' cried the sheriff. 'Fling him over the rails,' roared the mob... The crowd was wrought up to such an ecstasy of rage that the executioner was in danger of being torn in pieces, and was conveyed away under a strong guard."

We will leave it to the reader to decide who corresponds to whom in this analogy. If the Counihan Campaign turns towards the labour movement it is not enough to place demands on the Labour Council and party leaders. It must also ask to address the council unions and Unison in particular. It is they, after all, whose job it is to physically carry out the cuts. Rose McIntosh is probably a member of Unison. How do we get them to refuse to make the cuts and rally the fightback? As the editorial and Grass Roots Left flyer points out Unite has a thoroughly hypocritical stance on the cuts, they denounce them but do their utmost to

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

ensure there is no organised opposition to these same cuts. Barnet is the council where the nightmare of the post-welfare state has first raised its ugly head. Here the Tory council intend to privatise all its service and become the paymasters for private capital-provided skeleton service which manage destitution, as in the good old USA. Neighbouring Labour Brent had decided to ally with Barnet in this privatisation project, but have now backed off. But Barnet Unison has a solution. They intend to retain their union subs by making the cuts to the jobs and services themselves. Is not this an example of 'caring cuts'? Unison is here offering to destroy the wages and conditions of the workforce it represents in order to win the "in-house tender". The sentence "we are asking for the Council to work with staff, unions and the community to develop efficient, innovative services for Barnet residents and ensure savings go back into the pockets of the council tax payers." says it all.

John Burgess, the Barnet Unison Secretary, welcomes this "fantastic news" and takes the opportunity to "applaud the Council for at last recognising the potential of in-house services to be able to compete with the private sector." In his mind defiance is futile, the market rules ok and if the lives of workers are destroyed, wages cut, jobs lost and vital services destroyed but at least he had a hand in ensuring it was not far worse than that! The fact that he has fought in the past is no excuse for capitulating now.

And look at the example of Edinburgh City Council that he gives:

"Our proposal - In house model, There are a number of examples of where Councils have followed this approach to good effect. Most recently Edinburgh City Council considered the potential for using private contractors to deliver a wide range of its services. It embarked on separate procurement processes for 3 blocks of services utilising the Competitive Dialogue process in an attempt to obtain the best offers

available from the market. At the same time in-house teams were asked to work on service improvement plans or Public Sector Comparators, so that when it came to the award of contract, the Council could be sure that the services it was purchasing would genuinely optimise its use of scarce resources. In the end the Public Sector Comparators proved to be more attractive than any of the external offers and no contracts were awarded. Our UNISON branch has produced a list entitled "100 PLUS reasons why One Barnet is high risk and bad for residents and services"."

So Edinburgh were "utilising the Competitive Dialogue process in an attempt to obtain the best offers available from the market" so that "the Council could be sure that the services it was purchasing would genuinely optimise its use of scarce resources", i.e. there is no question whatsoever in the mind of the Unison bureaucrats locally or nationally that there should be any fightback against the "facts of life" – the Con-Dem government has made the cuts so now the council is left with "scarce resources" and the "markets" must have the "best offers available" so the workers must pay, BUT, not as much as they would have to pay if they were thrown to the open market free enterprise wolves of Capita or BT.

If Unison did not intervene to offer their heads on the block with these caring cuts they would be far worse off than they will be now is the thinking. There is no question of refusing to make these appalling cuts, striking, occupying and taking on the government. It is clear from this piece that the cuts are going ahead in tandem between the TU bureaucrats, the Labour party, and in the case of Barnet, in collaboration with the Tory council. See Barnet UNISON website at, <http://www.barnetunison.me.uk>

The Counihan Campaign must fight to resolve the immediate problems of homelessness for the family. Hopefully a solution is not far off, certainly the family cannot sustain this level of stress amounting to torture ongoing since



The late D of M beheaded on Tower Hill 15 july 1685

And to spell out the historical lesson in detail - those who make 'caring cuts' end up often inflicting more pain and suffering than the clean cut and, far more importantly, they delay, divert and in the worst scenario destroy entirely, the indispensable fightback of the mass of the working class and oppressed, the only force that can stop these cuts and open the road to a socialist future by challenging and overthrowing the capitalist system of greed and private profit itself.

January. But this Campaign has the potential to develop into a real mass movement if it gets its orientation correct; it has mobilised the working class on the South Kilburn estate in a most exemplary fashion. Its success is based on the militancy shown by both the RCG and the SP. If it can get the labour movement orientation right and learns to work with the Labour left it may become regional and national in its scope.

The true role of the National Shop Stewards Network

By Laurence Humphries

The role of the NSSN Leadership in recent months has been to draw closer and closer to the trade union bureaucracy. Their favourite bureaucrats at the moment are Bob Crow of the RMT and Mark Serwokta of PCS. At their recent Conference they were able to draw over 400 workers. They are controlled and influenced by the Socialist Party. Their leading members, Linda Taffe, Rob Williams and Kevin Parslow are in the SPEW. This pseudo-Trotskyist group are a bunch of left reformists who are drawing closer and closer to the lefts in the trade union bureaucracy. At the recent Unite policy conference the NSSN managed to get a motion discussed about closer ties with the Unite bu-

reaucracy through sponsorship.

The history of the NSSN goes back to 2006 when Bob Crow set out to form a Rank and File organisation, always though under the influence of the RMT. At the time both the SPEW and the SWP were active and on the Steering Committee. There were anarchists and non-aligned socialists as well. On a fateful day in 2011 the following happened "at its steering committee on 4th December the Socialist Party dominated NSSN decided to for an NSSN ALL-Britain anti-cuts campaign" [1]. This was a sectarian move designed to drive their opponents out of the Steering Committee. The SWP and others left the Steering Committee leaving it

fully under the control of the SPEW. There are still some principled fighters in the SPEW on the Steering committee. Glenn Kelly and Suzanne Muna part of the UNISON 4 who were witchhunted by the UNISON Leadership and are now in Unite. Rob Williams is also a principled fighter having taken a stand in the past.

Their answer to all the developments in the working class is again to Lobby the TUC for another 24 hour general strike, which is not a general strike but a one day protest similar to the one last year and the consequence was betrayals and sell out by the union leaderships. When Steve Ballard and I raised objections to this policy we were told that the NSSN was under the remit of the RMT and as we were only a network so we can only advise. They are again reduced to pleading with the TUC bureaucracy. Their activity in recent months has

been to tail end and follows the bureaucracy like lambs to the slaughter.

The recent pension disputes show the role of both the SPEW and the SWP who have members on the executives of PCS and NUT. Their failure to mobilise their supporters on a campaign of strikes and occupations was a total betrayal and sell out; when push came to shove they lined up with the bureaucracy. These left reformists have no perspective on how to clarify politically the task ahead and how to defeat the anti-union laws in practice. The sparks have shown how to do this in their recent dispute over BESNA and now in the Crossrail dispute.

Bob Crow of the RMT can only plead for more TUC demonstrations rather than give us a perspective on how to defeat the anti-union Laws. *"We need to mobilise for the demonstration on 20th October to ensure it becomes the springboard of the mass movement"* [2] he said.

Trotskyists have a different perspective "we seek to build a Rank and File movement independent of the bureaucracy. We do not want to seize control from the current leaderships around the SP, but to make it a real democratic movement that is independent of even left bureaucrats e.g. get rid of clause 3 which forbids "Intervention in the internal affairs of Trade Unions" [3]. The fact of the matter is that there are several "Rank and File movements" including the NSSN, Right to Work and Coalition of Resistance, but they are all under the control of bureaucratic left reformist groups like the SPEW, SWP and Counterfire. They are all part

of the left wing TU Bureaucracy and are always willing to open their platforms to these left bureaucrats without either criticising them or asking them to account for their roles.

For Trotskyists the task is still to unite under a real Rank and File democratic movement. Grassroots Left is such an organisation. As a Socialist Fight supporter I will fight in the NSSN for that perspective to split and win the best elements to Trotskyism. Lenin was quite clear on the nature of the bureaucracy and Left reformism *"The victory of the revolutionary proletariat is impossible unless this evil is combated, unless the opportunist social traitor leaders are exposed, discredited and expelled"* [4]

Endnotes

- [1] Socialist Fight Issue No 5 Winter 2011-12
- [2] NSSN Leaflet Lobby the TUC to call for a 24 General Strike
- [3] Socialist Fight Issue no 1 Winter Spring 2009
- [4] V I LENIN : Left Wing communism, an Infantile Disorder



Bob Crow of the RMT can only plead for more TUC demonstrations rather than give us a perspective on how to defeat the anti-Union Laws. "We need to mobilise for the demonstration on 20th October to ensure it becomes the springboard of the mass movement" he said.

Grassroots Left 3rd National conference

In the Conference Room

At The Comfort Inn

Station Street, B5 4DY

Opposite New St Station, **Birmingham City Centre**

Saturday 17th of November 2012

From 12 noon to 4pm

<http://www.grassrootsleft.org/>

Unite Construction Rank & File
(Siteworker)

28 EIS workers sacked on Crossrail project...

...So we fight back!

5th October: 28 workers including 2 reps have been sacked at the Westbourne Park site for daring to join a Trade union! One of those sacked was a safety rep. Shortly after the sacking there was potentially a very serious accident at the site, when an earth moving conveyor [hopper] collapsed, luckily though no one was injured, this time anyway!

Since the sackings, and for the last 3 weeks there have been daily pickets at the Westbourne Park site. Please get to the picket any time between 7am to 1pm. The nearest tube is 'Westbourne Park' and the site is opposite the station. 4 or 5 pickets can cause havoc at the Crossrail site, just imagine what 40 or 400 could do!

Remarkably there are those that still say blacklisting is a thing of the past?! But its going on right here right now! So as well as the daily

pickets we have had a some great protests over blacklisting and EIS sackings with our comrades in Blacklisted Supporters Group [BSG].

BAM the main contractor at Westbourne Park are one of the biggest 'Blacklisters' going. There have been plenty of coverage in the press lately on 'Blacklisting'. Massive thanks to BSG. When employers break the law our response has to be 'CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE ALL THE WAY'

Combine meeting? What Combine meeting?

Did you know that there was a Combine meeting on the 3rd October? No? Neither did many of those who did not receive notice of the meeting! So at the meeting on the 3rd Oct there were only 10 in attendance. If you were not informed about the meeting then please send emails/letters of complaint to: Bernard 'moving forward' McAulay. Email address: Bernard.McAulay@unitetheunion.org

Note: Another combine meeting is planned for November, so make sure you are informed.

Play by the rules? Crown House don't!

We know that Crown House are still up to no

good, so keep the 'play by the rules' forms going and also the weekly protests near you, if you can.

We are appealing to you all to contribute to the EIS hardship fund, make cheques payable to 'Joint Sites Committee' and send to: 70 Darnay Rise Chelmsford CM1 4XA. Please raise at your workplace/union branch/Trades Council/any meetings or wherever you can. Cheers.

Finally [and good news], we now have now got a few activists on Unite's [construction] Regional Industrial Sector Committees [RISC's] and the National Industrial sector Committee's [NISC's]. Nice one, keep on keeping on eh!!

An injury to one is an injury to all: Solidarity forever

For more info please visit... Electricians Against The World <http://www.jibelectrician.blogspot.com/>

Mass picket continues Crossrail site Westbourne park, two stops from Paddington. No to blacklisting of Unite members! No agencies on Crossrail let's sort project out now Please spare a bit of time on your way to work, please support and pass on, many thanks.

Get in touch with us by Email siteworkers@virginmedia.com

The Truth about Hillsborough: an establishment frame-up of the working class

By Roy Bentham, Hillsborough survivor and leader of the Blacklist Support Group (BSG).

Socialist Fight is proud to publish this personal account by a leading trade union militant and Ucat member, carpenter Roy Bentham, who was blacklisted on building sites. The endnotes were added by the editor.

A story in The Observer on 4 March 2012 *Police are linked to blacklist of construction workers* revealed the extent of the state and employers conspiracy against the militant builders.

"The (blacklisting Ed) scandal will be thrown open to further public exposure in the coming months as a class action by 100 victims against at least 39 companies is set to be pursued in the high court by Hugh Tomlinson QC, currently counsel for several of the phone-hacking claimants. The revelations will inevitably raise fresh questions about the probity of the police in a week in which its relationship with major news corporations, and News International in particular, has come under sharp focus. Last week the Leveson inquiry heard that the police were investigating a "network of corrupt officials" as part of their inquiries into phone hacking and police corruption."

In response to the story Roy told UnionNews:

"It's frankly pretty shocking. We didn't expect this. But it's great now that it's out in public, showing the lengths the authorities have gone to, to blacklist trade union activists."

Labour MP John McDonnell has called for a parliamentary investigation into claims that police and the UK security services assisted in the compilation of an illegal blacklist of trade unionists and safety campaigners, who were denied work and have endured long term unemployment due to the blacklist operated by the Consulting Association.

Brian Higgins, a blacklisted bricklayer and spokesperson for the Blacklist Support Group said:

"Even Rupert Murdoch apologised and offered compensation to victims of phone hacking by his paper and assured everyone hacking is over. But these construction companies have offered and given nothing but more of the same."

"The Consulting Association blacklist only ceased operation because they got caught. The blacklisting still continues today: workers were dismissed from the Olympics because of the blacklist and many more denied work on the project."

Campaigners are pursuing legal action in the UK and European courts.

Part of their case is based on hundreds of files revealed by the Information Commissioners Office.

Campaigners say ICO documents and evidence at Employment Tribunals prove the involvement of companies at director level.

The legal firm taking up the class action has served formal letters on the companies involved and court hearings are expected later this year.

The 12th of September 2012 will be etched into the memory of the City of Liverpool forever [1]. For me as a Liverpool supporter, it felt like we'd won the league again. I hope you'd forgive me that one indulgence. You see this was a monumental day that seen a heavy cloud lifted from the consciences of this proud and wonderful maritime enclave. To me it felt like the emotional chains I'd been constrained by for over two decades had been unshackled. I was outside the Anglican cathedral when this major story of vindication unfolded. Liverpool is a most welcoming place with scouse wit and warmth in abundance. Its diverse cultures through being a port have made its uniqueness its most endearing quality. It has been that way since it welcomed seafarers from all corners of the globe over a whole raft of centuries that have since passed.

It has in the main, always adhered to the great Bill Shankly's socialism. The great man believed in people helping each other, working together and sharing the rewards within society and they were his ideals. However it's also a place where fools aren't suffered gladly or the perpetrators of slurs for that matter but this is something that was bestowed on this city and anyone connected with it on the 15th April 1989 by the wider authorities. I've struggled to talk about the 15th April 1989. That was until now. I've never put pen to paper on events of the day or the aftermath either. That was, until now.

I'll give a brief timeline of events in 1989 for those unfamiliar with the 15th April at Hillsborough when 96 fans went to an FA Cup Semi Final in Sheffield and never returned. It has to be remembered it was in a period where Thatcherism had already bitten the region hard. That's the context I've always seen it in. I'll try and simplify it best as possible.

- Supporters go to football match.
- Supporters crushed after authorities lose control of situation.
- 96 innocent fans lose their lives.
- Cover up of authorities goes into overdrive on accountability and smear campaign kicks in.
- Numerous subsequent inquests and judicial inquiries prove nothing more than a whitewash for the families and survivors.



Roy Bentham (pictured, negotiating access with police for Rank and File Sparks march, London Nov 2011) "It still galls me to think that, as a survivor myself and someone who is close to some of the families who lost loved ones, we've had to personally put up with the stigma of a perception that we were culpable for merely turning up at a football match on a glorious spring afternoon."

Establishment had seemingly succeeded in throwing a wet blanket over the biggest miscarriage of justice in British legal history after the Hillsborough Independent Panel (HIP) reported 164 police statements being altered by the police themselves. That HIP report exposed the last 23 years for what they were: a sham.

So had they succeeded? The short answer to that is No. They never reckoned on the sheer spirit forged in historical struggles when this once world renowned port had taken up arms. This was a thriving combustible place once deemed worthy of the term "an organiser's graveyard" back in 1935[2]. Go back further to just over a hundred years ago to 1911. This was the year of the "Liverpool Transport Strike"[3] with colossal leaders such as James Larkin, one of the greatest sons born here to have come to prominence. He was a real champion of the working class. He believed class should always transcend religious divides.

That 70 day plus standoff with the authorities over wages and workers rights was later followed by the "Police strike" here in 1919 [4], the last time they were involved in any industrial action after the state draconically withdrew their right to engage in Industrial action. And then in the movement that lead up to the "Great National Strike" of 1926 which saw warships placing their guns on the city from the Mersey in 1919 [5].

Injustices, and social injustices at that, have been at the heart over a number of periods in Liverpool for over a century. Fast forward to the 1980s. The Toxteth riots in 1981[6] was a catalyst to further widespread unrest around the downtrodden ethnic working class communities around the country. The Socialist Labour Council of 1984[7] which

wholeheartedly stood shoulder to shoulder with the striking miners and fought cuts to livelihoods and services and then onto Heyssel 1985[8]. Against this, we had an Iron Lady led government intent on battering those working class communities into submission. Just recently, damning reports denoted that this central Government was using a policy of managed decline for Merseyside at this time.

In short, this was a city which had previous and would trade blow for blow against the capitalists in their Ivory Towers, namely the Houses of Parliament. It was something the city had always done instinctively. It was in its very fabric. It was in its genes. The heroic Dockers dispute which gained international solidarity after Hillsborough in 1995 and 1996 in which local idol Robbie Fowler "nailed his colours to the mast" This merely underlines the city's values [9].

Hillsborough was a godsend for Thatcher and her machine. It was the "perfect storm". She could demonise and isolate us further within this period along with the Murdoch propaganda which was now coming out at a rate of knots. It still galls me to think that, as a survivor myself and someone who is close to some of the families who lost loved ones, we've had to personally put up with the stigma of a perception that we were culpable for merely turning up at a football match on a glorious spring afternoon.

That was until the 12th September 2012. I can now talk about that day without any guilt or fear of retribution. My recollections of 2.30pm onwards of that day are ones of contrasting extreme emotions. Being in a pen that had twice as many supporters in that it should have had. Being pulled out of that by a lifetime friend is why I can put these experiences across today. I felt despair, I felt relief, I felt astonishment at what I was seeing unfold after being winched up out of that rapidly deteriorating pen into the stand above.

Inwardly for the next days, weeks and months, despair was my overriding feeling. I'd put a brave face on as an apprentice joiner at my workplace on a building site but when alone I'd try and deal with what happened on that day. I tried to carry on as normal.

That was difficult. I never spoke about it to family, friends or my girlfriend for that matter. The subject on the whole was taboo. I lived in silence. My fellow brothers and sisters had been slurred by elements of an establishment-driven press and some of that mud had stuck.

Here we had a sporting disaster of unsurpassed proportions in Britain and myths were soon passed off as fact.

The supporters were to blame we heard from those persons who had platforms. I heard a good analogy from a friend of mine a couple of days back. He said "It was like a plane crashing and the survivors where getting the blame". We were blamed for the mistakes of plane's pilots, the plane's MOT certificate and the manufacturers of the plane. Most damningly, we were blamed instead of the authorities who sanctioned this plane taking off for this journey in the first place.

One of the enduring legacies of this miscarriage of justice will be the other endemic and systematic breaches of trust in which the authorities colluded in. Hillsborough 89 will now be mentioned in the same tones as Bloody Sunday in 72,[10] Birmingham Six in 75, Guildford Four in 75[11] also and Orgreave in 84[12]. Throw in the Shrewsbury Pickets of 72 some 40 years ago and which is soon to be heard by the Criminal Cases Review Commission and the facts and similarities are explicitly laid bare [13]. It will go into school curriculums shortly as a reference point and lesson on how disasters affect communities and its many implications politically.

Hillsborough has served to politicise a generation and more. Young and older people of the city now speak the same political language. Conservatism of the 80s was denounced at that time in its entirety. Conservatism of this century is equally dismissed even if the Prime Minister claimed to have given an unreserved apology on that groundbreaking day. Cameron said "It would be like a blind man looking for a black cat in a dark room" when talking about the campaigners.

A campaign by the families and survivors which took a number of guises always had one common goal. That crusade took so many people to the edge. Brothers took their own lives. Marriages and relationships fell by the wayside. Friendships were compromised due to their extreme emotive nature of events on the day and afterwards too. Good people are still receiving psychiatric help. All of this was overcome though never forgotten.

Hillsborough in a historical context will be seen as a triumph for socialist principles by a predominantly socialist city. A common cause unifying the city and clearing all the obstacles put in front of it. It has been done voluntarily by giants of whom there are too many to mention. The Heroes of Hillsborough numbers thousands. Both Red and Blue who fought together for the result achieved on



Thatcher at Hillsborough; she bears the main political responsibility from police brutality and arrogance after condoning countless acts of violence during the miners strike.

the 12th September 2012. I've been fortunate to have seen and been involved with that first hand. This was a city coming together and putting tribal rivalries aside.

I've seen remarkable human strength in adversity. I've learnt comradeship and families fighting together transcend everything. As Bill Shankly once said, the Kop is like a massive family. You instinctively knew you were amongst friends. Never were truer words spoken and needed. Liverpool as an extension of that too is one massive family. 23 years of struggle has emboldened that.

The Truth [14] is out to the world now. Now justice must be seen to be served. Only then can the families and survivors begin to think about closure and with it any thoughts of this moment being the beginning of the end.

God bless the 96!

Endnotes

[1] Hillsborough disaster report published - Wednesday 12 September. Report casts doubt over original inquest ruling, revealing that 41 of the 96 victims 'had the potential to survive'. South Yorkshire police and emergency services made 'strenuous attempts' to deflect blame for the crush onto victims. 116 of 164 police statements were 'amended to remove or alter comments unfavourable to South Yorkshire police'.

Police carried out blood alcohol readings on victims, including children, in order to 'impugn their reputations'.

[2] From a Communist report of 1935: "Liverpool is an anarchic place where spontaneity and the flamboyant gesture are preferred to the disciplines of tactical thinking and planned interventions. Liverpool is an organiser's graveyard." 1935 was the year that the Communist International adopted the Popular Front theory whereby industrial militancy was to be sacrificed for alliances with Liberals and Bishops to prevent the rise of fascism. This abandonment of the class independence of the working class resulted in the victory of Franco in Spain four years later. Liverpool was having none of it.

[3] The 1911 Liverpool General Transport Strike involved dockers, railway workers and sailors, as well people from other trades. It paralysed Liverpool commerce for most of the summer of 1911. It also transformed trade unionism on Merseyside. For the first time, general trade unions were able to establish themselves on a permanent footing and become genuine mass organisations of the working class (Wiki).

[4] Of the 1,874 members of the Liverpool City Police, 954 went on strike. The Bootle police union claimed that 69 out of 70 officers had joined the strike.

The grievances of police in Liverpool were for many years ignored by a local Watch Committee noted for its disciplinarian attitude, which helped foster the propensity for collective action. The poor conditions in the Liverpool Police were well-known amongst other forces in England. (Wiki) It was revolutionary times.

[5] A short history of the British working class movement to the 1926 general strike: "In Liverpool (in 1911) it almost turned to civil war. A General Transport strike with Dockers, Seamen, Carters, Tramwaymen, Railwaymen, a total of 70,000 being out. The leading figure was Tom Mann. The Police brutally charged a monster demonstration on St. George's Plateau causing a great outcry. Warships were moored in the Mersey their guns trained on the city. The troops were called out and two workers were shot when a crowd of demonstrators, said to be attempting a rescue of prisoners, were fired on. So alarmed were the authorities that the local territorial, which included many trade unionists and kept their arms at home, were ordered to remove the bolts from their rifles and turn them in at headquarters. In January 1912, after the Glasgow Dockers struck the Dockers were in action again in London where 100,000 came out"

<http://rtuc.wordpress.com/2009/12/15/a-short-history-of-the-british-working-class-movement-to-the-1926-general-strike/>

H.M.S. Valiant, a super-Dreadnought battleship of the Queen Elizabeth class, arrived in the Mersey on Monday morning 4 August 1919. Her displacement is 27,500 tons, speed 25 knots, and her armament consists of eight 15-inch and sixteen 6-inch guns. She carries two aeroplanes. Her normal complement is 942 men. The Valiant is accompanied by two destroyers.

[6] The Toxteth riots of July 1981 ... followed the Brixton riots earlier that year. The Merseyside police force had, at the time, a poor reputation within the black community for stopping and searching young black men in the area, under the "sus" laws, and the perceived heavy-handed arrest of Leroy Alphonse Cooper on Friday 3 July, watched by an angry crowd, led to a disturbance in which three policemen were injured. Local



The gutter press slandered the victims to protect the real culprits: the police, the Tories and the capitalist establishment. They all hated the militant Liverpool working class.

magistrate, Councillor and Chair of the Merseyside Police Committee, Margaret Simey, said of the rioters "they would be apathetic fools... if they didn't protest... One main cause of poverty in the area was containerisation at the nearby Liverpool Docks, ending thousands of waterfront-type jobs which had been associated with the city of Liverpool for generations. With the economy in recession, unemployment in Britain was at a 50-year high in 1981, and Toxteth had one of the highest unemployment rates in the country (Wiki).

[7] The Militant Tendency is now split into the Socialist party, international grouping, the Committee for a Workers International and Socialist Appeal, international grouping International Marxist Tendency. In 1984 it was a Trotskyist entryist group within the British Labour Party based around the Militant newspaper...Militant played a leading role in Liverpool City Council between 1983 and 1987 when 47 councillors were banned and surcharged. From 1983, a series of moves led by the Labour Party's National Executive Committee and leader Neil Kinnock led to the expulsion of prominent members of the group, and the eventual loss of Militant's three Labour MPs (Wiki).

[8] In the Heysel Stadium in Brussels before the start of the 1985 European Cup Final between Juventus of Italy and Liverpool of England thirty-nine Juventus fans were crushed to death and 600 were injured.

[9] Robbie Fowler, then the highest paid player in British football, pulled up his shirt after scoring against Brann Bergen, in a European Cup Winners cup match in March 1997, to reveal a mock Calvin Klein T-shirt with the OK in the "dockers" in support of the striking Liverpool dockers. He was fined 2,000 Swiss Francs (\$1,400) by UEFA.

[10] On 30 January 1972 in the Bogside area of Derry, Northern Ireland, 26 unarmed civil-rights protesters and bystanders were shot by soldiers of the British Army. Thirteen males, seven of whom were teenagers, died immediately or soon after, while the death of another man four-and-a-half months later was attributed to the injuries he received on that day. Two protesters were

also injured when they were run down by army vehicles. Five of those wounded were shot in the back. The incident occurred during a Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association march; the soldiers involved were members of the First Battalion of the Parachute Regiment (Wiki).

[11] After a pub bombing in Birmingham, allegedly by the IRA in 1974, six innocent men were tortured by police to obtain confessions. They were found guilty and served 16 years before their convictions were quashed. The Guildford Four and the Maguire Seven suffered a similar fate following another pub bombing in Guildford. Such was the evidence of state collusion in these cases that

there is a 75-year immunity order to prevent the truth coming out. These convictions form one of the darkest chapters in the history of the British criminal justice system

[12] The Battle of Orgreave is the name given to a confrontation between police and picketing miners at a British Steel coking plant in Orgreave, South Yorkshire, in 1984, during the UK miners' strike. In 1991, South Yorkshire police were forced to pay out half a million pounds to 39 miners who were arrested in the events at the Battle of Orgreave (Wiki).

[13] After the 1972 Building Workers' National Strike 24 Trade Unionists were tried at Shrewsbury in a hostile act perpetrated by a Tory Government to criminalise picketing. A number of these men were given severe prison sentences. Best known of them were Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson, who became referred to as the "Shrewsbury 2."

Des died as a direct result of the treatment that was meted out to him during his lengthy incarceration. Successive Governments, both Tory and Labour, have remained unresponsive to the calls for these perverse judgements to be set aside, and for these men to be cleared. There is now a renewal of the Campaign, even after all this time, and the death of some of those involved, to secure justice for these TU Comrades. <http://www.shrewsburypicketscampaign.org.uk/index.htm> The campaign is also calling for a Public Inquiry to expose the role of successive governments and the secret services in the events surrounding this important time in labour history.

[14] Refers to the infamous Sun headline above. Subsequent (to the report) apologies were released by Prime Minister David Cameron on behalf of the government, Ed Miliband on behalf of the opposition, Sheffield Wednesday Football Club, South Yorkshire Police, and former editor of The Sun, Kelvin McKenzie, who apologised for writing the headline "The Truth". McKenzie said he should have written a headline that read "The Lies", although this apology was widely discredited by the Hillsborough Family Support Group and Liverpool fans, as it was seen to be "shifting

The Anti-Fascist Network and the future of Militant Anti Fascism

By John Beirne, anti-fascist activist

The Anti Fascist Network (AFN) was formed in late 2010 by a number of primarily anarchist groups, as well as some individuals. The previous year or two had seen many groups and individuals travel to anti-English Defence League (EDL) demonstrations, however we didn't know each other. Often there were up to 100 people from separate groups, all willing to take direct action against the EDL, but no co-ordination between groups usually meant we were going around in groups of 10, unaware of other groups willing to deal with the EDL in a direct manner.

I can't really go further without explaining how the situation arose that, despite the massive growth in far right street presence, there was no militant anti-fascist group to combat this.

The main reason for this is the state's effective wiping out of the Antifa movement. The background to this is that on the 28th of October 2009, the neo-Nazi Blood and Honour organisation were hosting a secret concert in Welling, South East London. With some information being passed on to Antifa, an attack was mounted on the gig goers, which culminated in a fight on the platform of Welling train station with two badly beaten German neo-Nazis having to run for their lives down the railway track. While undoubtedly a good win for Antifa, the level of violence wasn't above what would be seen in any street in any town across the country on a Saturday night.

In the months that followed 23 people were arrested in early morning raids throughout the country, with one member being taken off an aeroplane at gun point by anti terrorism police. Initially they were charged with violent affray, which would have been impossible to convict more than two or three people for, based on the evidence of the incident, which was the grainy CCTV footage of one camera. The charge was changed to conspiracy to commit violent disorder, which twenty two people were charged

with. Due to the amount of people charged, the case had to be split into two trials. Over the course of the trials thousands upon thousands of emails, text messages and phone records were produced to show evidence of the supposed conspiracy.

State prosecution during the trial made it clear that the trial wasn't about the incident on the night in question, but about smashing the Antifa organisation, which it effectively did by jailing six prominent members in the first trial for twenty one months each, as well as deporting another, giving them a ten year ban on entering the UK. The second trial went better with all the defendants acquitted after their defence ran a much more political trial than the first one. However, the level of knowledge the police now had about the organisation and the amount of money the state had pumped into pursuing the conspiracy charge meant the effective collapse of the organisation.

What the trial also did was throw up many questions for anti-fascists on how to operate whilst dealing with modern "total policing". It became clear that gone were the days of having a good barney with the far right, and essentially physically beating them off the street in the way Anti Fascist Action did in the 90s. The technology and investment forward intelligence teams (FIT) have at their disposal is colossal, and with CCTV being all pervasive it is almost impossible to have a situation where a group could effectively attack Nazis and hope to get away with it.

The trial and its repercussions couldn't have come at a worse time for anti fascists, what with the growing in strength of the EDL on the streets. This was when individuals within a lot of groups decided we just couldn't keep going as we were, attending demos in our own groups, without sufficient numbers to really have any effect on the EDL demo. It was for this reason the AFN was formed, and conscious of the fact that the tactics of previous organisations were now outdated,



it was decided that the Network would be exactly that - a network not a group. The idea being that the network has a few basic policies that all affiliates must agree to, such as not ever working with the police or state; however we do not tell each affiliate group how they must oppose or combat fascism, but we are there to back them up if there is a call out, or an EDL march in their area.

We try to use tactics that aren't necessarily looking to physically attack the fascists, such as occupying their assembly spots, blocking their routes, etc. So far this had a bit of success, our biggest success being the "March 4 England" in Brighton this year, where we successfully blocked the route, and despite riot and mounted police trying to force the march through, it ended up having to be redirected down a narrow side street, where the fascists were bombarded with bottles and bricks for 30 mins or so, suffering many casualties.

Tactics like this mean that the more trouble and potential confrontations that are caused, the more money the police pump into policing the next EDL march. The EDL look in terminal decline at the moment, and while I would like to say this is due to the efforts of militant anti fascists, I'm sure Unite Against Fascism think their policy of having a counter demo on the other side of town is what has damaged the EDL. I think the truth is that the people attending the EDL's demos are just sick of travelling miles to end up stuck in a police kettle for another few hours, before being escorted back to their buses and sent on their way. I do think militant anti fascists can take some credit for the reason there needs to be such a big

police presence, but the reason the EDL seem to be fading is more to do with disillusionment with the leadership, and dreary days out with no punch ups with reds or Muslims.

At the same time we are seeing a huge resurgence in traditional style fascist groups, particularly in the north of England, such as the National Front, in Liverpool almost the entire BNP membership defected to the Infidels, who are an EDL splinter group with a much more overtly fascist outlook and Combined Ex-Forces and Combined Ex-Services, who are also disaffected EDL members with more overtly fascist politics. For the first time in a long time left wing meetings, concerts and paper sales are being attacked. For anti fascists it's essential that we organise quicker and more effectively, which we are certainly not doing at the moment. The Anti Fascist Network is a step in


the right direction, but what the left need to learn is that the state isn't here to protect us from fascists, we have to do it ourselves, and Unite Against Fascism with the likes of David Cameron as one of their founding signatories, and its leadership full of community leader careerist like Lee Jasper are not the solution. We need to provide a real alternative to Fascism, that isn't seen as in bed with the establishment but attempts to answer the questions on Islam, on immigration and on race from a radical class perspective, not just sweeping them under the carpet and labelling as igno-



The EDL in Brighton: "What the left need to learn is that the state isn't here to protect us from fascists, we have to do it ourselves, and Unite Against Fascism with the likes of David Cameron as one of their founding signatories, and its leadership full of community leader careerist like Lee Jasper are not the solution".

rant anyone who asks these questions.

We hope the Anti Fascist Network is a small step in providing that alternative.



**Irish Republican Prisoners
Support Group**
PO Box 59188, London, NW2 9LJ,
irpsgroup@gmail.com

Irish Freedom Committee list of Irish Republican POWs
last updated: 8/28/11

PORTLAOISE PRISON Portlaoise, County Laois, Ireland

E-3
John Brock 6 Years Dublin
Anthony Crowley 10 Years Cork
Bernard Dempsey LIFE Dublin
Aidan Hulme 20 Years Co. Louth
Robert Hulme 20 Years Co. Louth
Jim McCormick 22

E-4
Thomas Morris 6 Years Dublin
Fintan Paul O'Farrell 30 Years Co. Louth
Matthew Perry n/a n/a
Barry Petticre 5 Years Belfast
Declan John Rafferty 30 Years Co. Louth

E-2
Anthony Deeryn/a Derry
Cormac Fitzpatrick 3 Years Monaghan

Tony Hyland 25 Years Dublin
Tom Hanlon n/a Cork
David Jordan n/a Tyrone
Tarlach MacDhómhnaill n/a Co. Louth
Michael McDonald 30 Years Fermanagh
Dermott McFadden n/a Derry
Michael McKevitt 20 Years Dundalk
Phillip McKevitt n/a Louth
Darren Mooney n/a Dublin
Conan Murphy n/a Louth
Liam Rainey n/a Antrim
Maghaberry Gaol, Roe 3, Old Road, Ballinderry Upper Lisburn, Ireland BT28 2PT
1. Brian Shivers - Magherafelt
2. Harry Fitzsimons - Belfast

3. Sean McConville - Lurgan
4. Damien McKenna - Lurgan
5. Gary Toman - Lurgan
6. Brendan McConville - Lurgan
7. John Paul Wootton - Craigavon
8. Kevin Barry Nolan - Co Cavan
9. Gerard McManus - Letterkenny
10. Willie Wong - Armagh
11. Tony Rooney - Belfast
12. Martin Corey - Lurgan
13. Joe Barr - Strabane
14. Jordan Whitehouse - Derry
15. Sean O'Reilly - Belfast
16. Robert O'Neill - Belfast
17. Martin McCloone - Derry
18. Mark McGuigan - Omagh
19. Phil O'Donnell - Derry
20. Gerry McGeough - Co Tyrone

21. Francis Carleton - Belfast
22. Packy Carter - Co Tyrone
23. Michael Johnston - North Belfast
24. Dominic Dynes - Castleblayney,
25. Brian Cavan - Dungannon
26. Brian Sheridan - Blackwater Town
27. Raymond Whitehouse - Derry
28. Raymond Wootton - Belfast
29. Thomas Maguire - Belfast
30. Mark Kerr - Derry
31. Tony Taylor - Derry
32. Kevin Murphy - Coalisland
33. Kevin Vernon - Belfast
Special Supervision Unit - Isolation
Liam Campbell
Gavin Coyle
Hydebank Wood Hospital Road BELFAST

BT8 8NA
Marian Price-McGlinchey
MAGILLIGAN PRISON
Point Road Limvady Co. Derry
BT 49 OLR
Noel Maguire
Liam Hannaway
The Grove Castlereagh Gaol Castlereagh, Co Roscommon Ireland
(IRSP) Eddie McGarrigle
Johnny McCrossan
Pravieniskiy Pataisos Namai-stviro'j Kolantja 2-O'jl Valdyba Pravieniskiy # K
Kaisiadoriu r LT- 56552
Lituania
Michael Campbell

Plebgate, experts and the prosecution service

By Michael Holden

Whether Andrew Mitchell ever called the Metropolitan Police 'Plebs and Morons' we shall probably never know. The Right Honourable MP for Sutton Coldfield and ex-officer in the Royal Tank Regiment has been informed the CCTV footage at the gates of Downing Street do not prove or disprove he ever said either word. The Downing Street police however insist he did. Can we assume then that they were traumatised and needed counselling as a result? I doubt it!

Anyone who has ever had the bad luck to be arrested and questioned in a police cell know only too well how undisciplined the police are - or can be - when it comes to interrogating a suspect. The racial and verbal abuse flows freely in such circumstances, not to mention the pushing and shoving and physical abuse that often goes with it. According to media reports attempts to 'lip-read' the event were seen as inconclusive and that's a turn for the books. David Cameron refuses to release the CCTV footage and thereby denies the public the right to judge for themselves. But what's new? Maybe Andrew Mitchell is now of the opinion (seeing as he's not going to lose his Chief Whip's job after all) that there is only one thing in life worse than being talked about, and that's not being talked about!

To be honest I was unaware until then what the word 'pleb' meant! It's defined as 'a member of a despised social class, a commoner, a member of the plebs of Ancient Rome, low-born, undistinguished, vulgar'! God forbid, surely Andrew Mitchell doesn't see the Met Police in such a light? But we know his ilk are of that mindset. We know also the police occasionally go off the rails! The framing of the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four in the past, and more recently the double assault on the innocent Ian Tomlinson on his way home from work resulting in his death, and the shooting and killing of Mark Duggan in mysterious circumstances, not to mention the murder of Jean Charles de Menezes in July 2005.

Time and space prevents us from delving into police corruption - phone hacking, back-handers etc. The list is endless. Who for instance paid the bobby at the gate for the info on Mitchell's misdemeanour? Isn't that corruption by the media?

The lip-reading matter has grabbed the at-

tention of some MP's and a few journalists who are of the opinion the public should be given the opportunity to decide for themselves. They've called for the film footage to be released into the hands of 'professional' lip-readers! David Cameron is having none of it - and we can only guess his refusal is for a very good reason.

A few years back three Irish students - Darren Mulholland, Liam Grogan and Tony Hyland were put on trial at the Old Bailey on conspiracy charges. They had committed no offence but were charged with 'conspiring' to commit an offence! The court was told during their trial that all three men had been placed on 24 hour surveillance soon after their arrival in London. Tony Hyland and Liam Grogan it was alleged were filmed from a 'discreet distance' while having a conversation on a park bench.

The video tapes were then sent to a lip-reading 'expert' Jessica Rees. The court was told that Rees had "outstanding qualifications and a unique ability to lip-read." The Prosecution Service engaged Rees to produce a lip-reading transcript from the video. Rees claimed references were made by the defendants during their conversation on the park bench to 'Omagh' and to 'Michael McKevitt.' Jessica Rees's transcription was in fact post-Omagh bomb - which as a matter of interest occurred THREE WEEKS AFTER THE DEFENDANTS WERE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY! All three defendants vehemently rejected the authenticity, accuracy and validity of the 'expert' Rees's transcript. Gareth Pierce their barrister was not going to be hoodwinked by any of this and demanded the Crown Prosecution Service undertake a 'controlled experiment' in which two actors would be recorded from a distance with concealed microphones which would accurately record their conversation. These



Andrew Mitchell outside the Downing Street gate where the incident is said to have occurred. The reports in Rupert Murdoch's Sun and Sky News, "Best you learn your f***** place. You don't run this f***** Government. You're f***** plebs," are evidence of ongoing police/media corruption, the real story behind this debacle no one wants to investigate.

tapes would then be sent to the 'expert' Jessica Rees and her transcript could be compared to the actors recorded conversation. All parties agreed it was the fairest way to assess the accuracy and credibility of Jessica Rees's work. It transpired Rees correctly lip-read LESS THAN 3% of the words spoken by the actors during the controlled experiment and she FAILED TO IDENTIFY ANY OF THE TOPICS BEING DISCUSSED! Faced with these appalling results the Prosecution Service had no alternative but to withdraw Jessica Rees's ORIGINAL lip-reading transcripts as evidence and the court accepted this.

As a post-script to this article it's worth mentioning the BBC current affairs programme 'NEWSNIGHT' (following an interview with Gareth Pierce) exposed the fake 'expert' Jessica Rees, her inability to lip-read, her lack of qualifications and the many inaccuracies in her police work. Consequently NEWSNIGHT'S investigative report resulted in EVERY conviction which relied on her evidence to prosecute being re-opened and re-examined. There's no doubt that the police-sponsored lip-reading charlatan Jessica Rees is a perfect example of an underhanded illegal attempt by the state to indirectly connect Michael McKevitt and others with the tragic events in Omagh.

"Only the shallow know themselves" - Oscar Wilde.

Statement by the Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group

To whom it may concern,

The IRPSG has been the chief mobiliser for Republican prisoners in the north of Ireland in London over the past few years. We have always extended invitations to all other to participate in our mobilisations and some have responded well on occasion. We have always attempted to participate in the mobilisations of other Republicans.

However cooperation has fallen off recently and it has just now come to our attention that vile and baseless rumours are being circulated in Republican circles in Britain that a leading member of our group is a police agent. At the London demonstration of 20 October 2012 an IRPSG supporter was approached by a well known Republican who told him, "Have nothing to do with the IRPSG because ** works for the security services". He referred him to another well known Republican from a different group who he said had been inquiring about **. When our supporter approached him he then repeated the rumour.

This 'cop baiting' is lethal in all the movements of the oppressed and particularly in the republican movement where it has a long and igno-

ble history. We challenge these rumour mongers to have a meeting with us and present their proof. Who was betrayed, what information was passed on what payments in cash or kind was received? We assert without hesitation these stories are baseless and have their origins in past conflicts which were never properly investigated.

We are convinced that these attacks originate in political opposition. Those who mindlessly pass them on because they suit their current political needs may find themselves caught in a climate of such suspicion and distrust that all political mobilisations in London for the cause of Republican prisoners in the north of Ireland become impossible to organise. And who benefits from that?

It is well known that the leading activists of the IRPSG are revolutionary socialists and leftists. We stand with James Connolly,

"If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organization of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through

her financiers, through the whole array of commercial and individualist institutions she has planted in this country and watered with the tears of our mothers and the blood of our martyrs."

We are Trotskyists, Communists, Maoists, Marxist Leninists and Republicans who take our internationalist duty seriously to defend the rights of oppressed peoples to fight with whatever means they see necessary to throw off the yoke of British and every other Imperialist power. We defend the civil and democratic rights of all Republican political prisoners without favour because we recognise none of them would be in prison for the 'crime' of trying to liberate their land from British Imperialism if Ireland was not occupied by British Imperialism.

We think that political differences after these principles are agreed are matters for debate in struggle but slanders and rumour mongering have no place in that struggle. If you have proof of wrongdoing please present it. If not apologise, withdraw and we can work together as comrades for the cause of the prisoners.

Gerry Downing Secretary Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group 30 October 2012

Letter to the Irish Post

From Charlie Walsh

Dear Editor,

I would like to reply to Joe Dwyer's letter of 18/8/12 where he accuses me of being sectarian. First off is it being sectarian to politically oppose the sectarian right wing pro-imperialist, bigoted anti-Catholic, anti-working class politics of the Orange Order? Is it sectarian to politically oppose right wing, pro imperialist, anti-nationalist anti working class politics of the various parties and strands of unionism, but in particular the right wing Democratic Unionist party led by Peter Robinson? Is it sectarian to politically oppose the right wing trajectory of Sinn Fein who has no problem sharing power with the right wing Democratic Unionist party in the British parliament at Stormont? Is it sectarian to politically oppose and criticize Sinn Fein's acceptance of and collaboration with Britain's state institutions operating in Ireland through British armed forces, the intelligence services, M15, M16, the police the courts, the prisons and the civil service all of which underpin the British partition of Ireland and this is the means by which British Imperialism continues its occupation, and oppression of the six north eastern counties of Ireland? The salaries of the parliamentarians at Stormont are paid by "the mother parliament" at Westminster and you have to pay your servants well. I am for class politics; I'm against sectarianism and sectarian head counts, as a revolutionary socialist, Marxist, Trotskyist and an atheist. I am for the unity of the working

class, Protestant and Catholic, North and South. I believe that it is only in the struggle for socialism and the crucial and critical role of the working class in that struggle that we can bring a united socialist Ireland and bring an end to British colonialism and British imperialism in Ireland. Marx wrote that the emancipation of the working class internationally from the shackles and chains that tie it hand and foot to capitalism/imperialism can only be achieved by the actions and struggle of the working class itself.

The struggle to unite the working class in Ireland and internationally around a political programme that puts its own independent interests first and separate from all other competing class interests can only be carried out by the class itself. Trotsky said the weakness of the British working class was that it wasn't conscious of its own strength. I am a supporter of a socialist magazine called Socialist Fight and I am also a member of the London based Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group set up in 2010. We campaign with other political activists for an end to the forcible strip searching of Irish Republican prisoners in Maghaberry prison which is carried out on the prisoners going to and from visits to and from court. The strip searches carried by the screws entail violence, assaults and beatings and solitary confinement is the lot of the prisoners. In August 2010 there was an agreement that a BOSS chair would be used instead of strip searching, but the Governor and the crews at Maghaberry broke the agreement. In response to this terrible abuse and the refusal of the Governor to give the prisoners the right to free association, the denial of full time education, adequate medical facilities along with the refusal to

end controlled movement, the prisoners went on dirty protest which is going on and is reminiscent of the dirty protests of the late seventies and early eighties and the hunger strikes of 1981 and the terrible distressing deaths of Bobby Sands and his nine brave comrades.

The prisoners also want POW status restored, which was given away by Adams and McGuinness when they signed the Good Friday agreement. We are also campaigning for the release of Marian Price who is seriously ill in hospital. Even when being examined by the medical team, she is in handcuffs to a prison screw. We are also calling for the release of Martin Corey and Gerry McGeough and for the right of Michael Campbell imprisoned in Lithuania to be brought back to Ireland. Marian Price, Martin Corey and Gerry McGeough are being held as political hostages by the British government but not charged with any offences. We appeal to the Irish community in Britain to support the civil human rights of the prisoners and to call for an end to the internment of Marian Price, Martin Corey and Gerry McGeough. One final point, what was McGuinness's intention in the small matter of Bloody Sunday when he met Mrs Windsor and did he remind her that she decorated some of the Paratroopers who murdered 14 Civil Rights Marchers in Derry? I doubt it very much after all you wouldn't want to embarrass your new best friend.

Yours Sincerely, Charlie Walsh, Pimlico, London

P.S If anybody wishes to join the Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group or want information about our work they can contact us at PO Box 59188 London NW2 9LJ irspgroup@gmail.com

Lights and Shadows from *Fifty Shades of Grey*

By Aggie McCallum in Australia

Women's liberation

Fifty Shades of Grey – the fastest selling book in publishing history with over ten million copies of the printed version sold in the first six weeks. In a six month period more than twenty million sold in the U.S. alone. It is almost impossible to find anyone who has never heard of the sensation. Articles about it have appeared in newspapers, magazines, posted on the Internet, discussed in chat rooms and talked about on panels (Q&A). A writer for the QWeekend, a glossy lift-out magazine from Queensland's biggest newspaper described it thus: *...the book that has sold more books than any other book since the invention of books!*

So what is it all about? How could a badly written (as many are saying) lite porn book be so compelling to so many and why has it achieved global status in such a brief time span? Does it have any valuable insights to offer humanity? Is it possible that such a book can set women's struggle for equality back fifty years as claimed by some feminists?

The author E.L. James said she based the book's characters, Christian Grey and Anna Steele, on Bella and Edward from Stephenie Meyer's vampire story *Twilight*. It is a method called 'fan fiction' where an author's writing is inspired by another's writing. In *Fifty Shades of Grey* the male character Christian Grey is a sexy, older, and experienced man who is the brutal master of his love interest Anna Steele. The male domination theme, which is commonly found in erotic romance novels, is a technique used by this couple to achieve sexual satisfaction.

The *Newsweek* magazine ran a *Fifty Shades of Grey* cover story by anti-feminist Katie Roiphe who leapt to fame in 1992 after publishing her book *The Morning after Sex, Fear and Feminism on Campus*. In it she blamed women for being raped, she attacked feminists for being zealous about rape and dismissed with a stroke of the pen, statistics on the extent of sexual violence against women. Her book was hailed as 'courageous' and received glowing reviews. She wades in on the *Fifty Shades of Grey* phenomenon speculating that the book is inconvenient for feminists because it does not submit to their politics and that the fantasy of being overcome by a man shows no sign of vanishing despite their equal pay for equal work. The media, enamored with the idea that feminists 'want to submit' continue to promote the anti-feminist line.

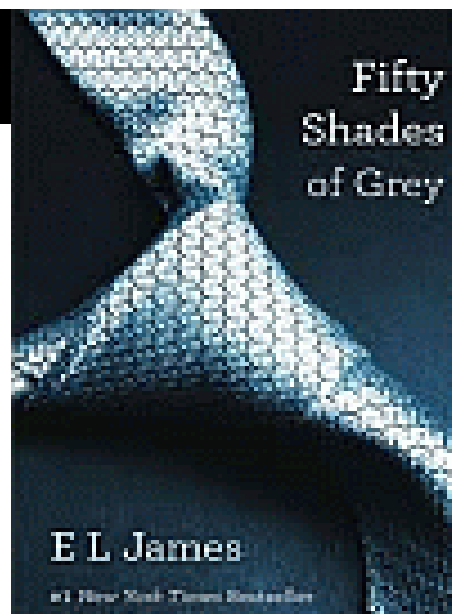
Another theory attempting to explain the book's popularity: there's a female stampede towards the use of pornography. Frank Bongiorno Associate Professor of History is the

author of a new book *The Sex Lives of Australians: A History* said his research shows women are increasingly prominent among users of porn. Also a 2008 survey *The Porn Report* discovered 17 per cent of porn users are women and the producers of the report believe this to be an upward trend...although it hardly constitutes a stampede. In recent years the porn trade has exploded into a billion dollar money making machine and the industry's growing audience is believed to be partly, if not mainly, due to the saturation and ease of access through current Internet technology.

Returning to fiction for a moment, I note that another bestselling novel includes a main character who is a male submissive. Dan Brown's book *The Da Vinci Code* brings to life Silas the Monk – a ruthless white male who regularly whips himself into a religious frenzy and wears a spiked *cilice* belt clenched painfully into his upper thigh. The technique is used as a perpetual reminder of Christ's suffering and helps the wearer counteract the desires of the flesh. It has long been claimed that masochistic rituals in religious orders are utilized to demonstrate and maintain a devotee's submission to Christ's teachings. Often this onslaught of pain to the body is accompanied by lengthy fasting. Although Dan Brown's book is a best seller, unlike the Anna Steele character in *Fifty Shades of Grey*, Silas is a social outcast and ultimately he's seen as a twisted and dangerous individual. Yet the average male is known to readily accept a role of submission but there is NO evidence that such men, including those who are rich and powerful, wish to extend that submission beyond the sexual act.

Noted in a number of reviews/discussions on *Fifty Shades of Grey* claims have emerged that erotic rape fantasies are common among women. There is research offered: *The Journal of Sex Research* published by the University of North Texas found that 57 per cent of women have fantasies in which they are forced into sex against their will. This unhelpful environment could impact on women's struggle for equality and lead to some areas of society witnessing a return of degrading sexist attitudes that many have worked hard to eliminate...an example: "when a woman says no she really means yes". Gail Dines, a left-wing media theorist, in a debate on pornography said... *to assume that porn is mere fantasy and does not impact on the way men think and feel is to ignore decades of research of how images frame our social construction of reality.*

Rapes, or forced sexual encounters, go far beyond the lights and shadows of fantasy and constitute a serious violation of human rights. The evidence shows this is a crime that erodes happiness, causes physical, psychological and emotional harm to the individual and hampers



their ability to be productive and fully functioning in society. It is shown to impact heavily on the men and children who love and share in the lives of the victims. To offer an example: The SBS television documentary *The Invisible War* aired in mid September 2012 revealed shocking and violent sexual assaults endured by thousands of female soldiers in the American military. The documentary brings sharply into focus the appalling nature of this crime and the statistics quoted in the program are staggering.

Military trained and highly 'disciplined' male soldiers (many Commandos) have no remorse in raping their junior female colleagues. The injuries from the sexual assaults included broken jaws, being placed on suicide watch, fractured bones, hip surgery and pins placed in the woman's spine. A victim's father, a Major in the army found that his position in the military hierarchy held no advantage when pursuing justice for his daughter's rape – he wept. The husband of another victim also wept as he spoke of the significant personality change in his partner after her degrading rape. Her case, when challenged legally, is claimed to have a 'successful' outcome...one of her rapists was charged and convicted of using bad language. Unlike Australia, Canada and the UK, the Americans keep investigations into sexual allegations within the chain of military command.

A small group of women have refused to continue to be the victims of their country's misogynist military culture and have instigated a class action against the powerful US military.

Recently I read the following words – words that hold no shades of grey or shadowy distractions...*those who control the means of production use their economic power to produce an ideological system that renders invisible the harm done to the oppressed – Karl Marx.*

Such words remind me that there are many challenges to face as we work to a fairer and better world.

Jim Fixed it for the Ruling Class Child Abusers

By Antonio Las Sogas & Brigid O'Duinn

By now nobody can fail to be aware of the unfolding paedophile scandal arising from the depraved child-abuse activities of 'Sir' Jimmy Savile OBE, KCSG. The scandal is set to explode in the faces of members of the ruling and media classes and rock the establishment to its core. Or at least it would if all the lines of inquiry are actively pursued to their natural and truthful conclusions.

As it stands, the investigation has so far gone backwards and uncovered already known paedophiles. At the time of writing just two of the usual suspects have been arrested or questioned, Gary Glitter and Freddie Starr. News reporting has focused predominantly on the activities of Savile and 'stars', particularly within the State Broadcasting Corporation, the BBC. But the allegations and the circumstantial evidence of the criminal sexual abuse of minors stretches much further, deep into the heart of the British establishment.

This news will not come as a surprise to those aware of Savile's long and close ties to members of the Royal Family, including Prince Philip and Prince Charles, as well as his special relationship with Margaret Thatcher and others in the ruling class. The Telegraph reported that Savile spent eleven consecutive New Years Eves at Chequers with Thatcher, her family and other 'esteemed' guests. The closeness of Savile to Thatcher was described in a diary entry by Auberon Waugh:

"Mrs Thatcher should use this [i.e. the Falklands War] as a golden opportunity to blow up the huge grain silos in Northern Argentina, containing all the wheat intended for Russia. In fact, I was urging her to do this long before the Argentinians invaded. But nowadays she listens only to Ferdinand Mount and Jimmy Savile. I might as well babble of green fields." [1]

In 1984 Savile was accepted as a member of the Athenaeum Club [2] in London's Pall Mall after his membership was proposed by Cardinal Basil Hume. The Athenaeum is a clergymen's club which counts among its members Cabinet Ministers, senior civil servants, Peers of the Realm and senior bishops.

The extent of Savile's relationship with Royalty enabled him to just 'pop-in' to St James' Palace and 'counselling' Charles and Diane throughout their divorce. [3] Charles is reported to have sent gifts to Savile on his 80th birthday, along with a note reading: *"Nobody will ever know what you have done for this country Jimmy. This is to go some way in thanking you for that."*

Now it is becoming abundantly clear not what Savile did FOR this country, if he did anything at all of any worth, but what Savile did TO the most vulnerable inhabitants of the country. The list of crimes is long and it includes hundreds of instances of sexual abuse against both male and female children, as well as repeated acts of procuring vulnerable, under-age children for his

list of celebrity and ruling class child abusers.

In his spare time, Jimmy liked to extend his paraphiliac sexual deviancy to the freshly deceased corpses at the hospitals where he was given free reign as a volunteer night porter [4]. The scandal extends into Leeds General Infirmary, Broadmoor, Haute de la Garenne children's home in Jersey and other establishments in which Savile, apparently on the basis of his tireless charity work, was given *carte blanche* right-to-roam and abuse. Notable also is that any challenges to his activities at the time they were occurring were usually not pursued within the organisation, nor investigated further, and certainly none ended in a prosecution that could have ended the serial-abuser's cycle of abuse far earlier than his death did.

Tory Health Minister and John Major's mistress, Edwina Currie, charged Savile with the running of a Broadmoor task-force during Kenneth Clarke's reign as Health Secretary [5]. Clarke himself has recently been named by child actor Ben Fellows who accuses Clarke of sexually assaulting him. Subsequent to these allegations, the Cabinet Office issued repeated orders to remove Ken Clarke's name [6] from the public record of allegations. Whatever happened to that favourite phrase of the ruling class, *"If you've nothing to hide, you've nothing to fear."*

Labour MP Tom Watson one of the few politicians who championed the cause of the victims in the Murdoch/News International phone hacking affair, another scandal that extends into the office of the Prime Minister, recently picked up the baton for the hundreds of victims of child abuse molested by an establishment paedophile ring. On October 24th 2012 Watson, with the benefit of Parliamentary privilege, made the following statement [7]:

"The evidence file used to convict paedophile Peter Righton, if it still exists, contains clear intelligence of a widespread paedophile ring. One of its members boasts of his links to a senior aide of a former Prime Minister, who says he could smuggle indecent images of children from abroad. The leads were not followed up, but if the file still exists I want to ensure that the Metropolitan police secure the evidence, re-examine it and investigate clear intelligence suggesting a powerful paedophile network linked to Parliament and No. 10."

It is unlikely that Jimmy Savile's depraved behaviour would have been unknown to the Security Services, especially whilst Brigadier Ronnie Stonham in Room 105 of Broadcasting House was vetting employees at the BBC [8] (looking for links to groups such as the WRP) and is even more suspicious given the thoroughness of the vetting required to obtain access to No. 10 and the Royal palaces. Perhaps Savile was acting as an agent of the State, providing information to the Security Services about his ruling class pae-



dophile associates? This might go some way to explaining how Savile's behaviour, which was widely rumoured and well-known to many – including several police forces, some of whom he held regular meetings with [9] – went unchallenged for so long. Indeed, the use of sex-scandal threats to bring those off-message into line politically is a well-known tactic of the intelligence services. Such is the true and ugly nature of the establishment.

Savile was clearly protected throughout his lifetime by the powerful members of the ruling class whom he knew, associated and abused with, simply because of what he knew about them. In interviews Savile threatened to "take them all down" with him were he to be outed. Previous child abuse scandals and cover-ups have had links to the Security Services and senior establishment figures. Kincora children's home in Belfast [10] and the North Wales child abuse paedophile ring [11], which mopped up the minnows rather than the more powerful sharks. The ruling class in America is no different, with child-abuse scandals surrounding the Whitehouse and former presidents Bush and Reagan [12].

It is imperative that all these links and connections are fully investigated no matter where they lead. It is our duty to ensure that the right questions are asked and that the truth of the criminality and abuse of children, power and privilege are investigated so the perpetrators can be finally brought to justice.

We know we cannot rely on the investigative and propaganda organs of the Corporate State to honestly report and uncover the truth. As this article was being finalised for publication, the BBC's flagship news programme Newsnight balked at naming a senior Conservative repeatedly implicated in child abuse allegations for years, Lord Alistair McAlpine, while only days previously the deceased child abuser Sir Peter Morrison was outed, with suggestions that William Hague would have been well aware of his perverted proclivities [13]. As a result we must do all that is in our power to determine and publicise the truth. Without a politically active population that utilises tools such as the Internet and social media to usurp the cover-up, the guilty will remain hidden and protected and the cycles of abuse of the vulnerable will continue unabated.

We owe it to all the poor, powerless, unfortunate individuals to ensure, no matter how many

years later this story is unfolding, that absolute justice is done. That there is filth and perversion at the heart of the Capitalist State, all abuse has power at its heart, will come as no surprise to Socialists and it is time for the whole rotten edifice to be taken apart.

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Tree planting ceremony for Terence MacSwiney Lord Mayor of Cork

By Austin Harney, Secretary of Barnet Trades Union Council

On Sunday 29th October the Mayor of Southwark planted one of the two trees and the second tree was jointly planted by two secondary school students from North Monastery CBS (Terence MacSwiney's old school in Cork) and two pupils from a Southwark Secondary School.

Large numbers of Irish migrants settled in Southwark in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and contributed to the development of the area. This inward migration of Irish people continued into the twentieth century until the late 1960s. Particularly, close ties were forged between Southwark and Cork following the death of Terence MacSwiney.

The MacSwiney family needed a large venue in London for obsequies connected with the death of the Lord Mayor. Bishop (later Archbishop) Peter Amigo kindly permitted Terence MacSwiney's remains to lie in a state in St. George's Cathedral. The British government had urged Bishop Amigo to deny the MacSwiney family access to the Cathedral's facilities. However, the Bishop resisted this pressure pointing out that the Lord Mayor was a Catholic and entitled to the services of his church.

Alderman George Alfred Isaacs, the Mayor of Southwark and a full time official of a print worker's trade union, led a party of four other London mayors as Terence MacSwiney's remains were taken in possession from St. George's Cathedral to Euston Station for the journey to Ireland. This participation of mayors from the metropolitan boroughs of Fulham, Lambeth, Poplar, Southwark and Stepney was a fine act of solidarity with the Irish people at a time when the two countries were locked in conflict.

Bishop Amigo was indefatigable in his efforts to promote peace. He wrote letters to the London Times about untoward events taking place in Ireland and opposed Lloyd George's policy of repression in the island. The Bishop urged the British government to enter into negotiations with the fledgling Irish administration with a view to settling the Anglo - Irish conflict.

St. George's was destroyed by incendiary bombs during World War II and Irish people acknowledged a debt of gratitude when they helped in the post-war reconstruction of the Cathedral. Church gate collections were held throughout Ireland to help defray the cost of rebuilding St. George's - Irish people had not forgotten the friendship shown by Bishop Amigo to the MacSwiney family four decades previously and contributed generously towards the cost of rebuilding this English Cathedral.

When St. George's was formally reopened in 1958 An Taoiseach de Valera and Cork's Lord Mayor came to this event as did many other Irish

dignitaries. The Brugha/MacSwiney family were, also, present at the reopening of St. George's and remain in contact with the Cathedral to this day. (In 1945 his only child, Máire MacSwiney, married Ruairí Brugha, son of the famous anti-Treaty Republican Cathal Brugha)

The Cork Association is keen to acknowledge the links between Southwark and Cork, and the forthcoming tree planting in Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park will celebrate these bonds of friendship forged some ninety - two years ago. The Association would very much appreciate a message of support from SERTUC for this tree planting venture.

The Association would, also, value your help in getting the active participation of the local Hammer-smith, Lambeth, Southwark and Tower Hamlets Trades Union Councils because of the involvement of the labour movement in Fulham, Lambeth, Southwark, Stepney and Polar in the 1920 procession which took Terence MacSwiney's coffin to Euston station.

Dagenham and Barking have strong links to Cork because of the Ford factory in metropolitan Essex and the Ford works in Ireland. It would be excellent if the Barking and Dagenham Trades Union Council could, also, participate in the forthcoming tree planting in Southwark.

The Association is particularly keen to get the local trades union council banners present on display at the actual tree planting.

Indian revolutionary Bhagat Singh was an admirer of Terence MacSwiney and wrote about him in his memoirs. While in prison during his trial he went on hunger strike to protest the conditions in which Indian revolutionaries were being kept. He inspired Nehru, Gandhi and Ho Chi Minh.

Some of his well known quotes are,

"It is not those who can inflict the most, but those that can suffer the most who will conquer."

"I am confident that my death will do more to smash the British Empire than my release."

"I want you to bear witness that I die as a Soldier of the Irish Republic." (Wiki)



The above image is from PRINCIPLES of FREEDOM, by Terence MacSwiney, published after his death. MacSwiney was Sinn Fein Lord Mayor of Cork during the Tan War.

The Basque Country – fracture point?

By Cormac Mac Gall, October 2012

National liberation

In the first two decades of the 20th Century, socialist revolution was widely expected – after all its spectre had been haunting Europe for over fifty years – but it was anticipated in Germany. When it occurred however it was in Russia and the Bolsheviks took state power. Lenin explained that it occurred where the chain of imperialism was weakest. Looking around Europe most of the Left seem to think that Greece is its weakest link today. However a more careful examination might conclude that the weakest link is elsewhere.

The Spanish state is a forced union of at least four nations (some would say more), two of which have seen powerful popular movements for self-determination, which the constitution expressly forbids and guarantees that veto with its armed forces. Those two nations, Catalonia and the Basque Country, are also the strongest economic regions of the state.

In addition, the state has seen popular movements of resistance including the Democracy Now! and 15M (15 May 2011 when the mass movement began) movements in its capital and elsewhere, struggles against evictions, general strikes, scandals reaching not only its political and financial elites but even concerning the son-in-law of the King, Juan Carlos (Franco's chosen successor, Head of State and of the armed forces). Most recently, the Asturian miners, with a long militant proletarian history, have been placing flaming roadblocks on motorways cutting through their region, then as the police arrive armed with gas and rubber projectiles, fighting back with home-made rocket launchers. A protest march of a miners' delegation to Madrid recently, despite a media blackout, drew hundreds of thousands on to the streets to welcome them. The police batoned and shot the crowd with rubber projectiles then and again in recent huge demonstrations against cuts and bank bailouts.

The state is fundamentally unstable not only because of the classical class and national issues but because it is a pretend democracy even in bourgeois terms, a veneer over a state brought into being in a violent military/ fascist uprising and a civil war of three bloody years and imposing a fascist Christian dictatorship for forty years. Most of the fascist military, police, judicial, church, media and political figures of those years are now dead, their sons and daughters remain in power, along with others who have supped at their table since. Where else would one find a major social-democratic

party which, while in government, carried out a fascist terrorist war on an opposition movement in its own territory and in that of its neighbour, as did the Partido Socialista Obrero de Espana using BVE and GAL [1] during the 1980s?

All of Europe will be affected if the Spanish state experiences revolution but France is most vulnerable, not only because of its proximity but because that state also holds parts of the territories of both Catalonia and the Basque Country.

If the Spanish state is the weakest link in the European chain, the southern Basque Country contains the greatest threat to it and the state has underlined this with the heaviest repression of the Civil War, of the 40 years of the Franco dictatorship and of nearly 40 years of its "democracy".

Around 750 political prisoners out of a total population of just under three million (which includes the northern country, within French borders) are held in jails dispersed throughout the French and Spanish states. Many of these are ETA militants and many are also purely political or cultural activists, arrested, tortured and jailed under the Garzon [2] doctrine that "everything is ETA".

ETA was originally a militant youth organisation, a fusion of the youth wing of the Christian Democrat Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) and of young Basques strongly influenced by the Cuban and Algerian revolutions. Its process of formation took over ten years during the 1960s. Targeted by Franco's paramilitary police force, the Guardia Civil, its militants arrested and tortured for nearly ten years. ETA's first killing was of police at a road block in 1968, the perpetrator being himself killed while fleeing on foot. The second killing was a planned one, the Chief of Police of Donosti/ San Sebastian and a notorious torturer.

Throughout its history many police, army and administrative personnel have fallen to ETA operations and many of its own volunteers have fallen too. Some have been executed by garrotte or firing squad, some assassinated and some killed in action - many have been jailed for twenty years (which until recently was the maximum permissible in the Spanish state).

But after the conversion of the state to "democracy", under Garzon's doctrine that "everything is ETA", youth organisations, cultural organisations, newspapers, radio stations, "people's bars", political parties and platforms of the Abertzale ("patriotic") Left have been banned, usually with members jailed. While ETA is on the EU list of "terrorist" organisations, Batasuna, leading political party of the



Historically there have been mass popular support for Basques independence, their part in battle against Franco during the Civil War (1936-39) is well known. ETA declared a ceasefire in 2006. Nevertheless a part of the Basque population has continued to demand independence and since the economic crisis support has grown here and in Catalonia. Both regions are economically better off than the rest of Spain.

Abertzale Left, is not illegal except within the Spanish state. A new party, SORTU, was banned by the Spanish National Court just as it was about to take part in regional and local government elections but has now been declared legal by the state's Constitutional Court.

In the face of this repression, which includes torture (e.g. beatings, stress positions, temporary asphyxiation by plastic bag, simulated drowning, threatened and simulated rape – particularly on female prisoners – threats to family, humiliation), the many allegations of which are rarely even tokenly investigated, the Abertzale Left has reacted in the past by the creation of new parties and organisations, massive demonstrations of protest or of support for prisoners and street battles when demonstrations were banned, weekly prisoner support pickets in all towns, constant politicisation of all popular cultural and sporting occasions and the creation of a culture of resistance which is vehemently anti-imperialist, anti-fascist and anti-capitalist.

Within this culture operate many organisations and individuals of a wide variety of ideologies: socialist, communist, anarchist, environmentalist. The more centralised Abertzale Left has its own daily bi-lingual newspaper, GARA, a number of other organisations working on for example international solidarity or prisoner solidarity, also a socialist trade union, LAB, which has recruited about 15% of southern Basque workers.

LAB has forged an alliance with ELA, a trade union originally created by the Basque Nationalist Party and, along with a number of small Basque unions, at nearly 60% they represent the majority of Basque workers in the southern Basque Country (i.e. within Spanish borders). This alliance has in the last three years called no less than three general one-day strikes against the extension of age of retirement and cuts, the most recent of which in March of this

year, snowballed until it became a successful call for a general strike day throughout the Spanish state.

The two largest unions within the Spanish state, Comisiones Obreras and the UGT, have been party to social partnership deals for years and are widely regarded as compromised and ineffective in resistance. Nevertheless, they hold a substantial minority of unionised Basque workers whom they encourage to continue working during general strikes (with the exception of the most recent).

The leadership of the Abertzale Left has embarked upon what they term a “peace process” and ETA declared a “permanent and verifiable truce” in January of 2011 after an effective ceasefire of many months. The AL leadership often refer to the Irish and South African processes in support of their own and list among supporters of the process Gerry Adams, former Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) Bertie Ahern Kofi Annan, Brian Currin [3] and even, briefly, Tony Blair.

Supporters, rank-and-file activists and even middle leadership within the centralised Abertzale Left and also within the wider movement display a variety of attitudes, from confident support, through unease and even questioning, to outright suspicion and hostility. The middle section probably holds the most people, with minorities at both ends. But as increasing numbers of Basque militants learn about the reality of the Irish situation through visits, friends, blogs or other publications, they grow increasingly unhappy.

Given the frequent reference to the South African process, recent news stories of police massacres of striking miners there cannot have



Filipe Bidart, historical member of Iparretarrak, can now live in “iparralde” (north Basque country). Filipe Bidart was imprisoned for 19 years in French state. He was accused (falsely) of killing “gendarmes” (French police) when he was member of Iparretarrak. When he was in prison, he (and his family/friends) suffered the dispersion that Spanish and French states uses against Basque political prisoners. After getting his freedom in 2007, Filipe Bidart said that he is not free while the Basque country is under Spanish and French power. The French state forbade him to live in the Basque country. Today, May 29 2012, a judge has decided to repeal the prohibition. http://basqueconflict.blogspot.co.uk/2012_05_01_archive.html

helped but even in June Inaki Gil, a leading intellectual of the AL but without formal leadership position, characterised the South African process as “failed in terms of class”; in response to questions from an Irish delegate at the conference [4] he admitted it had also failed in terms of anti-imperialism; however he declined to comment on the Irish process. The movement’s leadership has strong ties to Provisional Sinn Féin and following the Massarene killings, [5] Batasuna released a statement endorsing the SF leadership in unrealistic glowing terms.

The Abertzale Left leadership responds to the unease by on the one hand waving the significant electoral successes gained by the Bildu party, created by its alliance with social democratic parties Aralar and Eusko Alkartasuna which among other gains, have given them control of the Donosti/ San Sebastian local authority and sent some representatives to the parliament in Madrid.

The Spanish state has not been very helpful to the project of the leadership of the Abertzale Left. Despite the renunciation of “violence” in Sortu’s constitution, initially it banned the new party, now however legalised through appeal to the Constitutional Court. It continues its repression, occasionally banning demonstrations, making the display of prisoners’ photos in bars or on balconies illegal, increasing the jail sentences of prisoners, keeping seriously ill prisoners in jail in violation of even their own laws, torturing detainees, jailing political activists and hunting down exiles for extradition.

It appears that the Spanish bourgeoisie is divided about how far (or how fast?) to accommodate the Abertzale Left’s project. Possibly even those who are attracted by it are playing “hard to get”, forcing the AL leadership further towards social democracy and towards alliances with reactionaries. In the latter case, it plays a dangerous game as the AL’s ranks grow increasingly uneasy and as the bourgeoisie increasingly faces mass opposition on its streets elsewhere throughout the state. The AL leadership must hope that the legalisation of Sortu and expected high gains for the party in forthcoming autonomous regional government elections will help them to allay suspicions and unease among its own, presumably also the hope of any moderates among the Spanish bourgeoisie.

Meanwhile, the larger organisations of the Left, in Europe – excluding the Irish Republican movement – ignore the Basques and their movement. Some require them to merge with the Left in the Spanish and French states, despite the compromised nature of these blocks and of their lack of solidarity with the Basques over the years. Others criticise them for having ambitions of bourgeois nationalism. The disregard is astonishing, in terms of the principles of internationalist solidarity, the degree of repression suffered by the Basque movement, its



The bombing of Guernica (April 26, 1937) was an aerial attack on the Basque town of Guernica, Spain, causing widespread destruction and civilian deaths, during the Spanish Civil War. The raid by planes of the German Luftwaffe “Condor Legion” and the Italian Fascist Aviazione Legionaria was called Operation Rügen. Basque nationalists advocate that the famous painting by Pablo Picasso be brought to the town, as can be seen in the slogan under this mural in Guernica (Wiki).

strongly leftist orientation and the proximity of the nation. If the Left in Europe withholds the hand of solidarity, they can hardly criticise the direction the Basques take. But they may also be passing up the opportunity of supporting a revolutionary situation in the weakest link of EU imperialism – the Spanish state.

Endnotes

[1] *Batallon Vasco Español* (1975-1981) and *Guerillas Antiterroistas de Liberación* (1983-1987), death squads of Spanish and European fascists and criminals, directed by senior army and police chiefs and at least one Spanish Government Minister, operating in the Spanish state but mostly on the French side of the border, attacking mostly Basque exiles.

[2] Balthazar Garzón, then Judge of the National Court, better known outside the state for his attempt to extradite Pinochet and later his pressing for the disinterment of Spanish Civil War graves, resulting in his dismissal. Despite these apparently democratic credentials, he has been one of the most assiduous in persecution of Abertzale Left political activists, using anti-terrorist legislation for bannings and arrests with incommunicado detentions, during which hundreds were tortured. He convicted and sent to jail many activists without investigating the many complaints of torture and retractions of confessions made by them in his court.

[3] Brian Currin (born 20 September 1950) is a South African lawyer who was instrumental in the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Wiki). This was part of the process by which the ANC/SACP/Cosatu alliance stabilised capitalism (and made millionaires of themselves).

[4] Annual conference in the Basque Country of European committees of solidarity with the Basque Country.

[5] On 7 /3/09, two off-duty British soldiers of 38 Engineer Regiment were shot dead outside Massereene Barracks in Antrim, Northern Ireland. The Real IRA claimed responsibility (Wiki).

US election offers no choices for workers and the oppressed

By John Leslie and Wayne DeLuca

Internationalism

US workers face high unemployment, an employers' offensive, austerity, and continued imperialist wars.

The official unemployment rate for September 2012, showed a slight improvement falling to 7.8 percent. This is good news for Obama, who has been claiming that the economic situation is improving under his administration. The US economy only added approximately 114,000 jobs -- far fewer than the 150,000 jobs necessary per month just to employ new workers entering the workforce. The growth in employment reflects an increase in the number of part-time jobs. The healthcare sector added jobs, but manufacturing lost 16,000 workers

The number of unemployed is 12.1 million, with 5 million of these counted as long-term unemployed. An additional 8.6 million work part-time jobs because they cannot find full-time work. Another 2.5 million are referred to by the government as "marginally attached" to the workforce. This means that some 23 million workers are still locked out of the US economy.

The "solutions" offered by both capitalist parties are cuts to education, public works and essential social services for the poor and elderly. Public sector unions, particularly the teacher's unions, are vilified by both ruling class parties as greedy and out of touch with reality. Public education is being slashed and public schools are being privatized at an alarming rate.

Imperialist wars and occupations continue to act as a drag on the economy, while arms manufacturers, energy corporations and banks reap massive profits.

Obama is trying to be a "populist" right now; criticizing bankers and the rich and appealing to the unemployed and workers. However, he has done nothing to create the jobs we need. He's trying to win Latino votes, but has deported more undocumented workers (400,000 annually) than G.W. Bush.

All the while, he's promising to make "hard choices" and balance the budget, which signals his willingness to attack workers' living standards. Obama is promising to raise taxes on the richest Americans, but these promises can't be taken seriously. Significantly, the Democrats held their nominating convention

in a nonunion venue for the first time in decades.

Mitt Romney, a product of the richest 1 percent, has remade himself from a GOP centrist into a hard right politician. He has repudiated his former pro-choice, abortion - rights, stance and his health care program enacted in Massachusetts, which is similar to Obama's Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as Obamacare. Romney's criticism of Obama's inaction on unemployment cites the 23 million unemployed and underemployed, who he refers to as our "brothers and sisters" struggling in this economy.

Romney's choice of Paul Ryan, an extreme right, free-market advocate and darling of the Tea Party faction of the Republican party, should cure anyone of illusions that Romney has the slightest concern for the victims of this crisis. In a 2011 interview with the right-wing publication, Human Events, Ryan referred to the Democrats' attacks on the rich and said that the Republicans "should not shy away from class warfare."

Following the attack on the US embassy in Libya, the Republicans have ratcheted-up Islamophobic rhetoric against Obama's supposed "weakness" against Iran and lack of support for Israel. In reality, Obama has continued the US imperialist policies of his predecessors, continuing the occupation of Afghanistan, and working to short-circuit the revolutions in the Middle East through interventions in Libya and, now, Syria.

Polls show Obama with a slight edge over Romney nationally and with the numbers very close in several key states. (The antiquated US electoral system means that a candidate could win a majority of the popular vote and still lose in the electoral college by losing in certain high population states.)

Obama's record in office is one of service to Wall Street. Despite the insane ravings of tea party supporters, not only is he not a socialist but he is really not even a liberal. His record shows the hollowness of his appeal to unions and workers. Elected in 2008 on the vague promise of "hope and change," Obama has delivered little for working people.



The Obama administration was clearly on the side of the bosses, sending the Coast Guard to protect scab ships from strikers. An alliance of Occupy activists and union members resulted in massive solidarity actions, including the shutdown of the port at Oakland, CA.

The threat of war against Iran is very real, as US imperialism works to isolate the Islamic Republic because of its alleged nuclear ambitions. Whoever wins in November, workers face the prospect of more austerity and war.

This points out the need for a working-class party and for a working-class fightback rooted in struggles against austerity. Early in 2011, the beginnings of a fightback emerged in Wisconsin as unions and supporters mobilized against Republican Scott Walker's proposal to gut public employee's right to collective bargaining. Wisconsin was indicative of what a militant fightback might look like, but the revolt was channelled into electoralism by the trade union bureaucracy and the Democrats.

Occupy Wall Street was another sign of a possible fightback, although it was uneven politically. OWS was an expression of popular anger against the banks and the government. Of course, the Democrats tried their best to co-opt the movement and win it for Obama, but it seems that most occupiers have refused. The Democrats combined co-optation and repression in order to put an end to OWS.

The Longview longshoremen's (ILWU) strike demonstrated how links between OWS and workers' organizations had the potential to shift the political landscape. The Obama administration was clearly on the side of the bosses, sending the Coast Guard to protect scab ships from strikers. An alliance of Occupy activists and union members resulted in massive solidarity actions, including the shutdown of the port at Oakland, CA. However, workers were saddled with a concessions contract for which they were not allowed to vote.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

At the beginning of the current school year, the Chicago Teachers' (CTU) strike energized the labor movement. The CTU built massive pickets and mobilized the Chicago labor movement. They built alliances with the community and parents. Democrat mayor, Rahm Emmanuel, (former Obama chief-of staff) took steps to break the strike, even trying to have courts declare the strike illegal. The contract won by the CTU is perhaps not a clear cut "victory," but the real lessons to be gained are how mass mobilization, labor-community alliances and rank-and-file organizing can help create a new class struggle union leadership.

In all of these struggles, the ties between the trade union bureaucracy and Democrats are exposed as a barrier to a genuine fight back by working people. The Democrats' anti-worker policies are carried out with the collusion of trade union tops.

Left illusions in Obama as "lesser evil"

The Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO-fightback), a Maoist group that was the target of FBI raids in 2010, has called for a vote for Obama! So has the Communist Party USA, which has called for a vote for Democrats under the guise of a "defeat the right" rationale. Left activists, Carl Davidson and Bill Fletcher,* wrote that Obama's record of imperialist war making and anti-worker actions don't matter. According to Davidson and Fletcher, defeating the Republicans is the primary task for the left.

However, none of the reformist groupings and Obama apologists on the left offer a real path forward only continued subservience to a bourgeois party in the name of lesser evilism. The fight for working-class political independence is a central task for working people and the oppressed. US workers need a party of their own, but how can such a party be

built?

First we need to draw the class line clearly and avoid illusions in multi-class "third" party efforts. Campaigns by "progressive" third party and independent candidates are a diversion from the harder road of building a party based in the mass organizations of workers. It is our contention that such a party will emerge not primarily as an electoral party, but from the mass activity of workers and communities in defence of their rights and living standards. This is why a united front fightback against capitalist austerity measures and the employers offensive is crucial.

*Fletcher is a leader of an organization named Freedom Road Socialist Organization. (FRSO-OSCL) There are two US organizations with the name Freedom Road --- the aforementioned FRSO-FB and Fletcher's organization.

Police brutality incident exposes the role of cops under capitalism

by John Leslie, Philadelphia, PA

On September 30, during a street party following the annual Puerto Rican Day Parade, a Philadelphia cop brutally attacked, then arrested, Aida Guzman. Video uploaded to youtube later that day clearly shows the unprovoked assault by Lieutenant Jonathan Josey. On the video someone behind Guzman is throwing liquid on the cops. Josey walked up to Guzman from behind and punched her in the face with his fist. Josey has a history of abuse complaints from members of the community.

The video quickly went viral on the internet and sparked outrage in the community. However, these sorts of incidents happen every day in oppressed communities in the US.

Philly cops have a history of racist violence. Perhaps the most notorious was the reign of terror of Police Commissioner, and later Mayor, Frank Rizzo. Rizzo's cops repeatedly assaulted members of the Black Panther Party and the radical MOVE Organization. In 1978, cops attacked the home of MOVE members in Powelton Village. The attack resulted in the death of a police officer from friendly fire. Nine members of MOVE were arrested and imprisoned for the death of the officer. The MOVE 9 remain in prison to this day.

In 1985, police surrounded the MOVE house on Osage Avenue in West Philadelphia. They fired thousands of rounds of ammunition into the house and dropped a bomb on the roof from a helicopter. The resulting fire destroyed 56 homes and killed 11 MOVE members, in-

cluding 5 children. Police also framed Black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal for the killing of a cop. Mumia had become a

thorn in the side of police for his reporting on police corruption and brutality. Other more recent incidents include the unprovoked beating of Askia Sabur and the terrorizing of Askia's family after they organized demonstrations against cop brutality. Nationally, the Oscar Grant case, where a Bay Area transit cop shot Grant in the back, provoked demonstrations and outrage. Police also attacked the Occupy movement in cities across the US.

All of this occurs in the context of the mass incarceration of Blacks and Latinos and in an atmosphere of repression against Muslims and immigrants. Political dissidents are also the target of police repression, including FBI raids on socialists and antiwar activists. Capitalism in crisis increasingly needs to turn to state repression. At the close of 2011, Obama signed the National Defense Authorization Act, which, for the first time, allows for the detention without trial of US citizens.

What is the role of cops in society?

We are often told that cops are here to protect and serve, but to protect what and serve who? Cops are usually from working-class backgrounds, but it's a mistake to think that they bring a working-class identity into the job. By becoming police, they become enforcers of the capitalist social order and protectors of capitalist property. This is clearly demonstrated by the police murder of striking South African miners and the daily violence against workers and the oppressed around the globe.



Philly cops have a history of racist violence. Perhaps the most notorious was the reign of terror of Police Commissioner, and later Mayor, Frank Rizzo (above). Rizzo's cops repeatedly assaulted members of the Black Panther Party and the radical MOVE Organization.

Guzman's attacker, Lt. Josey, has been suspended pending termination, and Mayor Nutter has expressed horror at the incident. The fact that Josey is African-American is irrelevant. Black cops serve the same racist power structure as white cops. Josey must be prosecuted for assault and the cops who stood by while Aida was battered should be fired.

On Friday, October 5, Nutter met with Guzman to apologize for the actions of his police. More than an apology is needed! An elected community-based civilian review board with the power to subpoena witnesses and fire and prosecute bad cops is essential. This will only be won through the unified, independent mass struggles of communities of colour and poor whites.

Letters pages

Critical factual error on MOVE

To the editors,

In the article, "Free the MOVE 9; On a MOVE for our children," in *Socialist Fight* No. 10, the writers make a critical factual error.

The MOVE 9 are indeed being held in Pennsylvania prisons for the alleged killing of police officer James Ramp. However, Ramp was not killed on May 13, 1985.

In 1978, a year-long siege of the MOVE house in the Powellton Village section of Philadelphia was ended when cops fired hundreds of rounds into the house. Nine MOVE members were convicted of killing a cop, James Ramp, in spite of evidence indicating that Ramp was killed accidentally by other cops. Within 24 hours of the 1978 attack on MOVE, the house was razed by bulldozers destroying any evidence that may have freed the MOVE 9. It was after this attack that MOVE members moved to Osage Avenue and fortified the house there.

Cops surrounded the house at 6221 Osage Avenue in West Philly on May 12, 1985 following alleged complaints by neighbours. At dawn on May 13, cops forced the evacuation of the neighbourhood and attacked the house – firing more than 10,000 rounds of ammunition in 90 minutes. Later that day, a police helicopter dropped a bomb, made of the explosives C-4 and Tovex, on the roof of the house in order to get rid of what cops and the media term as a "bunker." The "bunker" remained intact, but a fire broke out. Police Commissioner Gregore J. Sambor and Fire Commissioner William C. Richmond decided to let the fire burn in order to take out the alleged bunker. The fire burned out of control.

This outrage resulted in the deaths of 6 adult members of MOVE, including founder John Africa, and 5 children. Sixty one homes were destroyed and more than 250 people were left homeless. Not one of the cops or city officials who perpetrated this crime served a day in jail. One of the survivors, Ramona Africa, is the only person to serve any jail time in this whole catastrophe.

The surviving members of the MOVE 9 (Merle Africa died in prison) are indeed political prisoners. Their convictions were based on no physical evidence and on the lies and conjectures of prosecutors.

The MOVE 9 are not the only political prisoners held by Pennsylvania. Russell Maroon Shoats is a former Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army member imprisoned for the alleged murder of a park police officer. Maroon has been held in solitary confinement for more than 20 years because of his political associations. Another political prisoner in Pennsylvania's prison system is journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal. Mumia, a former Panther and MOVE supporter,

was framed for the killing of Officer Daniel Faulkner. After years on death row, he was moved to general prison population last year when his death sentence was converted into a life sentence. The massive international campaign to free Mumia is what saved him from execution by the state.

Supporters of Mumia continue to fight for his release from prison. There is also an international campaign to release Russell Maroon Shoats from the cruelty of solitary confinement.

John Leslie, Resistance Philly 15 /9/12

Letters from France:

Socialist Fight asked Yao Wenyan from France to respond to a young comrade who was inclined to support Jean-Luc Mélenchon after the recent French elections (see SF 10 – page 10, *The French elections*). He responds:

It is a hard question to answer. Mélenchon is the typical Trotskyist that has lost all his Trotskyist hopes and gone over to reformism and the "quite to the right" Socialist Party long since. He has been there part of some "left" (not much to the left in fact, "republican" as we say here) tendencies, and has been for many, many, years MP and Senator (the high but useless chamber in France). For some time the Minister of Education has not been known for a very left policy but was quite a disciplined member of the Jospin government. He is the one who has privatised more than the two conservatives governments before him had done. It was the time when people voted up to 10%. For LO (Lutte Ouvrière) and the NPA (The New Anticapitalist Party, Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste).

But two years ago, before the presidential elections he broke with the PS on the basis of a "fed up" position with the rightist course of the PS, claiming he was returning to the "basis of the left" (the program, never put in practice, of the reformist left; of reformism in a non possible reformist situation, or not willing situation because the conservatism and Capital most of all, are totally regaining what they have given because of the existence of the USSR)

He is a good tribune who has arise very quickly a vast popular movement (the ones in the French people always willing to hear a "left" discourse with some chances, or hopes, it will be realised or to win a substantial share in elections). Today he has a tactical position, he is a good tactician, he "dares" what is fundamental here in France (remember Danton, a radical opposed to the logic of the revolution itself) even if he made a blunder defying Marine Le Pen and being defeated by her. He is criticizing the government from the left, in a better way (in my view) than LO or NPA (separately) who "speaks" of building an opposition on the left but, as always are incapable, in the national political arena of joining the (correct) general thesis with the particularities of the class fight.

But doing this, Mélenchon is also making serious concessions to the governments. His MPs (he is not MP himself) are not voting against the government and declaring they will "never" do this, because it is a left government. Some "left" government! He is quite isolated in fact. The PCF MPs, are the main corps of the Front de Gauche MPs, and these people, as always are trying to have an agreement with the PS, even if the PS who does not need them and just ignores them.

Recently the PCF has said that the main speech at a meeting, should be delivered by someone else (thinking it would be one of them) because there were "no leader" in the FdG (Front de Gauche), which is an outright attack on Mélenchon. He answered basically by attacking the government (and thus putting the PCF in a uncomfortable position). The PS, in some patronizing way, answer that "it was too soon" to go further than what they have already done. They have not much at all, and most of it is in the bosses interest or in adopting an outright imperialist position, for instance on the Syrian question.

The PS counts on the 10% votes of the FdG, who in the French tradition of the "republican solidarity" must/should vote to the "left" in the second turn of every election coming. But not only this, they know that the labour (lay-offs) situation will be much worse in the immediate future and they don't want nor need the FdG (its non PCF part, some old old Trotskyists, Maoist, left socialist and others "out of the bin", old, demoralised but with "new hopes" people (remarkably there are no young people or very few) who are the real troops of the Parti de Gauche the other "party", a mainly electoral one, of the FdG)

Well, is there another alternative to this? If you take the main issue today, the Syrian question and the lay-offs, there is a "no choice", no alternative. If the masses don't take matters in their own hands, LO, NPA and Mélenchon will continue to make some 12% and less with the time passing, in elections and that will be all. They will have some participation in the class struggle. "All depend on the masses" as the old man said. If they don't move, we will have nothing.

If she wants to follow the trend today she can waste some time with the Mélenchon people, why not? She will go the an electoral party (I know it well, after the recent election the Parti de Gauche people simply just don't know what else to do...I know an very old ex...everything, who told me this in these same words) and be the fan of or a new Mitterrand (this is one of Mélenchon choices) or a new Largo Caballero (the 'Spanish Lenin' of CP myth, a social democrat demagogue who betrayed the Spanish revolution – Ed), a big mouth always voting and acting with the reformists. But looking at the real situation today, a real desert of thinking and action, why not? Better perhaps that making from time to time some comments not always corrects.

Re-reading this I note that I have not mention that for me, Mélenchon and the Front de Gauche (not its people) are on the other side of the front line of the class fight. They are open reformist, Keynesians in a capitalist world which needs to lower wages and pensions significantly, going back to the 30s or even further back. Reformist are today explaining to us that a "new" sixth republic will solve or get better every day with less democracy remaining in the "free" countries. That a big money loan by the ECB (European Central Bank) could resolve the European Crisis and that this is possible because of the "importance, strength or weight" of France (not French capitalism) etc. But, and this is a big "but", a lot of the most fighting workers and union members are willing to answer his calls for action.

That for one is one of the best qualities of the French working class, they want a fight. Recently I was at the NPA Summer meeting. I was on holidays near there. They were prepared for an attendance of 300 persons and hoping to have 400 hundreds at most after the split coming from their right, the GA (Gauche Anticapitaliste, Left Anti Capitalists) split, but there were 650, which is a very good number and signifies that people are looking and disposed not to accept without a fight the lay-off that everyone sees that will come, This is a good signal from my point of view regardless of the NPA position.

Then, when the big mouthed Mélenchon sincerely calls immigrants his "brothers", or to "take the power", these people, the ones who are agitating at work amongst their colleagues, the ones who are in every demonstration (when they are not at home ragging against the union sell-outs) and in every class fight, organising and fighting; they come and cheer. Some of them even vote Mélenchon. That is his electoral base that could be transformed into a fighting base. That's why a lot of "has been" militants coming from every left school have joined his party, turning it into a sort of melting pot that will not make a very savoury soup in my opinion.

Inside the FdG is the PCF and the mass of these soft leftist people have come from it or have passed through or near it. They have a very big influence there and for the moment Mélenchon must take their opinion into account, even their "coup bas" (the 'blow below the belt' tactics like denouncing 'bad strikes'). Could he succeed with this kind of militants, with his "program" (a real bourgeois program willing the sixties back)? I am afraid not. He will be a "straw fire" (as French people say) that will burn more or less depending on the fighting or electoral mood of the masses and/or on the emergence of a real communist party.

The automobile fight is coming soon, in September; it will put every working class organisation to the test. If there is a defeat, hard times will come. (The bourgeoisie will put every mean on the fight and they have began with a political offensive against the PS government to paralyse it's "will" to defend at least their electoral base.)

If a party should come out with even a medium/half victory, better to help them, waiting for more and better. The main factor even on this is, in my poor opinion, the masses. The need will create the organ in part. The other part will come from real communists. I really don't find them but as very little groups and even this having given no proof at all of their real capacity. We are back in Russia in 1915 without the capacity nor the experience nor the work of the Bolsheviks. All depends on the masses.

Yao Wenyan 1/9/12

Demo by the Front de Gauche

Today there was a demo of 50, 000 to 80, 000 in Paris called by the Front de Gauche people against the Treaty. It was successful enough to keep the fight going. The press is talking about him as the "extreme-left" leader, a title which was allocated to the NPA's Besancenot and before him to Laguiller of the LO.

He is also described as one of the main opponents to Hollande...even if he has said openly, in a broadcasted radio interview, that he is a candidate for the post of Prime minister of Hollande to make him "change his orientation". Which orientation, for him, is totally wrong and leading France into recession, and he confirmed this view when asked again.

Holland has put forward a tax plan of 20 billions euros (mainly charging the rich but it is unknown how the modalities will be applied and there is a suspicion that it will be "modified") but also he is proposing a new "flexibility plan" against the workers and 10 billions "less expenses" (cuts) coming from the government...and Mélenchon is crying that this policy will "strangled France" and he is advocating a policy which is the exact opposite.

More government spending then, more buying of the "debt" by the Central Banks. And to do this he is putting himself forward as Prime Minister for Hollande.

That's the man. It can be a very fine tactics or it can be a very nasty opportunistic move. The first can be considered, because no one will call him to the post. No bourgeois would put an outspoken Largo Caballero with pseudo-Keynesian policies in command. It is an inadequate, an impossible policy today in my modest opinion. LO did not go to the demo today with good reasons which are understandable to themselves but which isolated them. I have advocated that they should go and denounce this masquerade before the people. The Treaty is an attack on the workers but Mélenchon is



Jean-Luc Mélenchon, on the left, in 22 May 2012, in Strasbourg. "Inside the FdG is the PCF and the mass of these soft leftist people have come from it or have passed through or near it."

using this to promote himself. The NPA they were there side by side with Mélenchon and Laurent, the PCF leader. They speak of the "left course" but they can't help being the tail of the reformist.

One low range minister has answered the demo with a typical right statement that Holland's policy was "the only one capable of taking France out of the crisis", and that Mélenchon's policy was irresponsible, "A Sarkozy minister couldn't do "better".

Again on the today demo. A success, mainly for Mélenchon. He is becoming a problem to the government and the PCF. There were three positions on the demo as reported by the press:

The PCF one: *"This a salutary pressure because we want that the government to modify their austerity policy But it is not an opposition demo. We should discuss the matter in parliament and with the Hollande government"*. They are dreaming or openly cheating the people. The government, obeying the bourgeois class, will never change course without a large mass fight of the working class.

Mélenchon: *"The Socialist party is going to hear us (but in the sense of taking account our position), they will be forced to take us seriously into account"* and he directs his fire at the "narrow-minded ministers" who are responsible for the austerity plan, and principally at the Prime Minister, not Hollande and the whole government. He is also threatening that more and more demos will be called... but not being quite clear when and with what "mots d'ordre" (political priorities)

Poutou of the NPA has said: *"We are against austerity. The government is putting forward an austerity program; then we are against the government"* This is the new outspoken policy of the NPA.

LO? They didn't go to the demo...because it was a "diversion from the working class fight" and the swindler's Mélenchon bourgeois political manoeuvre. There in not a line in the press on them. The others have a large coverage.

Yao Wenyan 30 /9/12

What a strange but delightfully dialectical face 'liberation' has in Libya today!

By the Liaison Committee of the Fourth International

Political polemics

Reply to Michael Pröbsting (Rcit): Liberation struggles and imperialist interference - The failure of 'sectarian anti-imperialism' in the West: Some general considerations from the Marxist point of view and the example of the 'democratic revolution' in Libya in 2011

The 10,800 word article by Michael Pröbsting *Liberation struggles and imperialist interference* in Revolutionary Communism News Newsletter of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (Rcit), No. 12, 24/10/2012 deserves some consideration because it seeks to defend their indefensible pro-imperialist position on Libya and attacks those who took a principled stance.^[1] The Revolutionär-Kommunistische Organisation zur Befreiung - RKOB is the Austrian-based leading group.

Michael Pröbsting says, "Examples for such a reactionary position (sectarian anti-imperialism—Ed) are the Liaison Committee of the Communist League (Brazil), the Revolutionary Marxist Group (South Africa) and Socialist Fight (Britain) or the ICL/Spartacists, the Internationalist Group/LFI of Jan Norden or the Stalinist group the Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)"

We reject lumping together the positions of the Liaison Committee of the Fourth International with those of the ICL/Spartacists and the Internationalist Group/LFI. There are big differences; these two groups and the International Bolshevik Tendency, the third member of the 'Spart family', refused to defend Libya against the CIA-directed Benghazi rebels in their proxy war on Gaddafi from the outset and never took the principled orientation of the Anti-Imperialist United Front, adopting the softer and incorrect line of a 'military bloc', as against the positions of the early Comintern under Lenin and Trotsky, which Trotsky defended until his assassination in 1940.^[2]

However incorrect the label of 'sectarian anti-imperialists' might be for the first three groups mentioned it is at least arguable in terms of the political orientation of the Rcit. But it is clearly a lying political amalgam to lump in the ultra-Stalinist Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist) with the three; their leader Harper Brar took a totally unprincipled position of uncritical political defence of Gaddafi himself, visiting Tripoli to implicitly express contempt for the oppressed migrant workers in particular who suffered so badly under the regime and the pacts with Imperialism which resulted in the

detention of immigrants bound for Europe in concentration camps in the desert, etc.

And we reject also the suggestion that we hold the position of the old WRP under Gerry Healy and the present position of the WRP under Sheila Torrance who are similarly uncritical of Gaddafi albeit in the name of the objectively unfolding world revolution which found its unconscious agents in the form of Gaddafi, Arafat, Saddam and even Khomeini and not of the two stage revolution of the Stalinists, even if that is the ultimate logic of the Healyite position.

To substitute Gaddafi for Chiang Kai-shek in Trotsky on China in 1937 the LCFI defended the "remainder of the independence of Libya" – Gaddafi was not totally controlled by Imperialism. "The Eiffelite imbeciles try to jest about this "reservation." "The Trotskyists," they say, "want to serve Gaddafi in action and the proletariat in words." To participate actively and consciously in the war does not mean "to serve Gaddafi" but to serve the independence of a (semi) colonial country in spite of Gaddafi".^[3]

The Article itself

This consists of a long theoretical defence of the Rcit positions, drawn from the arsenal of Workers Power, from whom they split in 2011 with little political differences, and then a defence of their stance on Libya on the ridiculous basis that the current situation is a great step forward and the 'democratic revolution' is powering ahead. In the course of the theoretical defence Pröbsting either junks or contemptuously belittles great principles of Marxism, Leninism and Trotskyism.

He says, "We are anti-imperialist because we take the stance of the working class ... and not the other way round"

This is the position of the 'Eiffelite imbeciles' above. We must be anti-imperialist because Wall Street-dominated global finance capital controls all our lives. In claiming that they are taking the "stance of the working class" the Rcit mean supporting pro-imperialist workers in metropolitan countries who do not understand this, which is what all the Fifth Internationalist groupings which originated from Workers Power do. "The Bolsheviks-Communists support any real movement of the popular masses against the suppression of democratic rights" says Michael. But what is a "real movement"? As Trotsky says, "but the masses are by no means identical: there are revolutionary masses, there are passive masses, there are reactionary masses."

Michael says, "In reality the imperialist meddling is no help for the revolutionary-democratic struggle, but threatens to undermine it. That is why we have supported progressive liberation struggles of the masses against dictatorships, but at the same time rejected sharply imperialist



This October 2011 picture is supposed to be proof of the progressive character of the rebels. It is no more proof of anti-imperialism than the lone banner in Benghazi opposing Nato in February 2011 was. And the rebels, like those who promote the picture, seem to be totally unaware that it is Wall Street that has occupied Libya, with their assistance!

interventions. (e.g. the struggle of the Bosnians 1992-95, the Kosovo Albanians in 1999, the uprising against the Gaddafi dictatorship in Libya in 2011)."

But your 'rejection of Imperialist interventions' was purely verbal, you supported it and alibied it in practice by pretending it was not happening because it was a proxy war 'confined' to mass bombing in Libya and there were no openly admitted 'boots on the ground'. If fact there were thousands of Qatari troops and US and UK Special Forces operating in Libya as they are today in Syria. And note the 'threatens to undermine' bit. As we will see he goes on to claim that they failed in this putative endeavour and the 'revolution' has succeeded as a 'partial dual power' situation.

Michael says, "Only when the imperialist intervention is becoming the dominant feature of the political situation, revolutionaries must subordinate the democratic struggle to the fight against such an intervention."

When will we recognise that 'imperialist intervention is becoming the dominant feature of the political situation'? When the leadership of the movement supports it unequivocally and Imperialism supply it covertly or overtly with weapons and total political support, as in all these cases and now in Syria, we suggest.

Michael says, "Our anti-imperialism is a consequence of our fundamental position on the class struggle and not an overriding principle, which resides above the class struggle."

If anti-imperialism is not 'an overriding principle' it follows that there could be some pro-imperialist struggles that better serve the interests of the working class than defeating global imperialism, like defeating the local tyrant with the support of Imperialism. This is a statement of gross opportunism and a forthright rejection of fundamental Marxist positions!

And now Michael tries to portray himself as a principled Trotskyist, *"Our method is that during such just democratic or national liberation struggles we are on the side of the liberation fighters (who are mostly under bourgeois or petty-bourgeois leaderships) and support their military victory. We sharply differentiate between these progressive liberation struggles and the interests of the imperialist powers. While we support the first, we totally oppose the later. Hence we Bolshevik-Communists reject any imperialist interference and call for the defeat of the imperialist forces."*

But you did none of this. The 'liberation fighters' were reactionary pro-imperialist and al-Qaeda forces. You therefore supported Imperialist forces and called for their victory on behalf of Imperialism in all these conflicts and now in Syria.

Michael Pröbsting directly contradicts himself

Michael says, *"However Lenin and the Bolsheviks did not conclude from this that one should not support their national liberation struggle. Which conclusion did Trotsky and the Fourth International draw from the fact that the imperialist and petty-bourgeois public opinion in Western Europe and Northern America was strongly in favour of the Republican antifascist government in Spain in 1936-39 or for the national liberation struggle of the Chinese toilers under Chiang Kai-shek's leadership against Japanese imperialism from 1937 onwards? They certainly did not succumb to the imperialist and petty-bourgeois 'public opinion' when they gave critical but unconditional support to the Republican antifascist government or the Chinese struggles, but pursued the independent and internationalist working class viewpoint"*.

Here Michael Pröbsting directly contradicts himself. Where was the 'critical but unconditional support' for Libya under attack by Imperialism and its proxy armies in these conflicts and now in Syria? You directly succumbed to the imperialist and petty-bourgeois 'public opinion' by supporting the 'popular' uprising without questioning in any serious way either its pro-imperialism or anti-working class character. You ended up 'howling along with the wolves' because you had no 'over-riding principles' and postulated an impossible political formation, a pro-imperialist struggle that served the interests of the international working class! It is a monstrous insult to compare the Benghazi rebels to either the Chinese Trotskyists of the 1930s [4] or even the later Maoists or the Spanish Trotskyists [5] or the ranks of the POUM [6] and anarchists [7] in Spain in 1936-9.

And now Michael repudiates another central tenet of Marxism, *"Marxists must not start from the consideration: 'How can we as revolutionaries fighting in Western imperialist countries best oppose the pressure of 'our' bourgeoisie'."*

Oh but we must start from there if we are in an Imperialist country! That did seem to be good

enough for Karl Liebknecht in his famous 1915 pamphlet, *The main enemy is at home*. It has become part of the arsenal of every serious Marxist since he wrote, *"The main enemy of every people is in their own country! The main enemy of the German people is in Germany: German imperialism, the German war party, German secret diplomacy. This enemy at home must be fought by the German people in a political struggle, cooperating with the proletariat of other countries whose struggle is against their own imperialists."*

And why must we reject internationalism in favour of national chauvinism according to Michael? *"This is one-sided and thus opens the door to serious mistakes. It would be anti-imperialism for fools. One must start thinking from the viewpoint 'what is the independent class policy in the interest of the international working class and the oppressed people'."*

This is the 'Eiffelite imbeciles' third campist line yet again. We cannot EVER have a pro-imperialist movement that serves the interests of the international working class. Anti-imperialism must be in the DNA of every serious Marxist on the planet, only thus can you serve the interests of the international proletariat.

Michael says, *"The Libyan and the Syrian Revolution in 2011 also started as a democratic revolution as part of the Arab revolutions against the bourgeois dictatorships. So, contrary to interpretation of the sectarians, these civil wars started not as a conspiracy of imperialism – they were authentic liberation struggles of the workers and peasants."*

You can argue that there were uprisings for democratic rights (not 'democratic revolutions') in Tunisia, Egypt, the Yemen, Bahrain and even Syria but not in Libya. From the start the Libyan uprising was organised and orchestrated by pro-imperialist forces and CIA agents. There was never anything progressive or liberating about this Benghazi uprising except in the minds of a few deluded workers and peasants. The immediate lynchings of black workers gave the lie to that; this was an imperialist intervention to seize control of the 'Arab Spring' which they did all too successfully. In Syria there were some progressive aspects to the uprisings but Imperialist-sponsored forces quickly seized control and now have an iron grip on the opposition to Assad.

Succinctly Paul Wolfowitz [8] countered every word of the Rcit on Newsnight on 24 October when he was outlining how to bring the 'revolution' to victory in Syria and he said 'Libya is very pro-Western now! That goes straight to the heart of the issues. All principled anti-Imperialists and those concerned to forward the class consciousness of the international proletariat seek their defeat and the victory of Assad against them. They do so in order to prepare for the building of a principled anti-imperialist internationalist Trotskyist section of the Fourth International there.

Michael says, *"One has to concretely analyze if a*



It is a farce to see today the Emir of Qatar and the King of Saudi Arabia standing with Obama, Holland, Cameron and fake 'Trotskyists' leading the struggle for 'democracy'.

given democratic or national liberation struggle becomes fully subordinated to the imperialist manoeuvres and doesn't possess any significant internal dynamic of a workers and peasant liberation struggle. If this is the case, Marxists must change their position and give up critical support for the national liberation struggle."

Did not Imperialism get exactly what it wanted?

And that did not happen in Bosnia, Kosovo, Libya and Syria? Did not Imperialism get exactly what it wanted in the first three? Kosovo is practically a US colony run by mafia gangsters, Bosnia is little better and just look at the state to which your 'revolution' has reduced Libya! And a similar if not worse fate is looming for Syria. Just how bad does your 'revolution' have to get before you give up on it? Workers Power has never repudiated their support for the KLA and the Rcit is stuck with it too. [9]

Michael writes: *"Such complications, amalgamations of different and contradictory interests in a given military conflict are likely to increase in the future. Why? Because of the increasing rivalry between imperialist power... Unfortunately this aspect is completely ignored by many sectarians who fail to recognize that in addition to the old imperialist power – in North America, Western Europe and Japan – there are also new, emerging imperialist powers, in particular Russia and China."*

There may be new Imperialist powers but it is wrong to equate them like this. Now the dominant, war mongering imperialist forces on behalf of global finance capital are led by the USA and it is therefore correct for nations like Syria to get whatever assistance they can from Iran, China and Russia. Libya and Syria in particular getting support from Russia and China is not to be equated with opposition forces who are the cat's paw for the interests of this imperialist finance capital, centrally based in Wall Street. Syria is now attempting to defend what is left of its own right to self determination.

Of course if a direct imperialist war were to break out say between a US-dominated bloc and a Russia-China-German bloc then the dual defeatist tactic would be mandatory. With proper support for national liberation struggles that might break out during the course of the war, even if supported by one side or the other

etc.

Michael writes, "All this in addition to the well-known murderous suppression of the slightest sign of resistance of the Libyan people."

The 'Libyan people' would include CIA agents, those hired and bribed by them and those who had a desire to become the agents of Imperialist finance capital when it took over, not to mention the al-Qaeda fundamentalists who wanted to impose Sharia law and restore the oppression of women and agreed to be temporary allies of the USA, in an analogous to the duty of Marxists to be temporary allies of Gaddafi against Imperialist attack.

And now in the silliest and most indefensible part of the whole document, Michael writes, "Are the workers and youth today in a better or in a worse position than under the Gaddafi dictatorship?"

Only a very naïve man would ask such a question and be surprised at getting the opposite answer to the one he expected. Consider the following quote,

"The giveaway of Libya's oil, the principal objective of the NATO powers, is no small matter. Libya's oil was privatized in short order, with contracts allotted according to the number of bombing runs each country had made—France on behalf of Total, Spain on behalf of Repsol, Italy on behalf of Eni, England on behalf of BP and the U.S. on behalf of Marathon, Hess and ConocoPhillips. This will have the effect of reducing revenues to the new government, which will have to fill the funding gap by cutting social spending to the bone and taking out loans from the international financial institutions, like every other neoliberal state.

This is not to say that sectors of the Libyan population (or the Syrian or Iranian population for that matter) don't have legitimate grievances against their nationalist dictatorships. However, when their countries are targeted for regime change by foreign transnational capital and their own emerging domestic transnational capitalist class, any military alliance that government opponents make with these globalizing interests is an act of treason against their own people. This is a global class war and the United States and other NATO powers represent the interests of the transnational capitalist class, not the Libyan working class."^[10]

It is of prime importance to note that nowhere does Michael or the Rcit oppose the recolonisation of Libya and the oil grab of the western companies. He did find space to attack Gaddafi's lesser capitulation to Imperialism but the total prostration of the rebels as described above is a total irrelevancy in his eyes.

A partial dual power situation indeed!

He then goes on: *The sectarian "anti-imperialists" claim that in Libya the counter-revolution – i.e. NATO imperialism and its agents, the supposedly "racist" rebels – has won*

the civil war. Consequently they consider the outcome as a defeat for the working class. We on the other hand think that the Libyan Revolution ended in a partial victory for the working class and the oppressed because it defeated the bourgeois-bonapartist Gaddafi regime. True, the bourgeois, pro-imperialist leadership around the TNC tries to hijack this unfinished democratic revolution and turn it into a democratic counter-revolution. However this process is far from completed. What we have today in post-Gaddafi Libya is a crisis-ridden regime which is divided by various factions. It is divided not only by power struggles but also – and to a large degree because of – the pressure of the masses. What we have today in Libya is a partial dual power situation. What constitutes this partial dual power situation?

This must be the most farcical paragraph in the whole document. A partial dual power situation indeed! The phrase was first used by the Bolsheviks to describe the situation in Russia after the February revolution of 1917 where massive workers councils (Soviets) effectively controlled the country, vying for power with the government itself. Eventually the Soviets abolished parliamentary democracy and instituted the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' in which the working class ruled. This was replaced by the dictatorship of the bureaucracy under Stalin in about 1924.

Maybe if he wrote a 'potentially partial dual power situation' we might get far enough away from reality to fail to notice that the working class has not got an ounce of influence here and the only 'dual power' operating is between the al-Qaeda fundamentalist militias and the pro-US forces.

Michael takes his information on Libya from Carlos Munzer and the Democrática Obrera. His claims for the revolution in Libya are hot air; we would recommend double-checking it all. However we must confess a lack of knowledge of the working class forces on the ground in Libya. If they are reviving as suggested by Munzer then intervention is clearly called for to turn them against the pro-Imperialist influences they are under. Even if strikes are underway as he claims and "The workers have formed new trade unions and are organizing themselves in Rank and File structures. They have more rights and power than under the Gaddafi regime" then these are pro-Imperialist organisations.

See for example his position on Syria where the main enemy is Assad, and Russian and Chinese Imperialism. There is absolutely no opposition to the US, the EU, Turkey, the Saudis or the Qataris.

"In Greece and the whole Europe, it is necessary to paralyze all the ports and ships that transport weaponry and food to murderous al Assad, and instead ship food and weaponry for the heroic Syrian resistance! The Russian and Chinese working class has to revolt against the assassins Putin and Hu Jintao just now! It is urgent to stop the counterrevolutionary war machine of Putin



U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens suffering the same fate as Gaddafi at the hands of the same barbaric people. Alexander Higgins blog; "Then came revelations of evidence the ambassador was actually captured by the same terrorists he helped put into power who tortured and lynched him and 3 other Americans as Libya security forces stood by and watched."

and Hu Jintao's that are arming to the teeth genocidal al Assad! It is urgent to send weapons, equipment and food to the masses that are fighting in Homs, Damascus, etc.!"

Revolutionary Combatants of the Libyan Militia Internationalist Volunteer Workers Committee Adhering: Fracción Leninista Trotskista Internacional. http://www.democraciaobrera.org/pag_ingles/medioriente/2012/carta_tunez_delibia042012.html

Maggie Michael of Associated Press tells us exactly what kind of 'masses' these are,

"Some 30,000 people filled a broad boulevard as they marched along a lake in central Benghazi on Friday to the gates of the headquarters of Ansar al-Shariah. They carried banners and signs demanding that militias disband and that the government build up police to take their place in keeping security. "Benghazi is in a trap," signs read. "Where is the army, where is the police. Other signs mourned the killing of U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens, reading, "The ambassador was Libya's friend" and "Libya lost a friend." Military helicopters and fighter jets flew overhead, and police mingled in the crowd, buoyed by the support of the protesters".^[11]

And so the last hope for the revolution is... Ansar al-Shariah! They will just have to substitute for the Bolsheviks! What a strange but delightfully dialectical face 'liberation' has in Libya today! Sound just like the days before the storming of the Winter Palace in 1917 Russia, does it not?

As we write this the town of Bani Walid is under siege. According to the Inter Press Service News Agency pro-government armed militias were trying to indiscriminately kill large numbers of people in Bani Walid, because of its history of support for Gaddafi. Amnesty International says many continue to be detained without being charged or put on trial across Libya, and have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated. The International Centre for Prison Studies (ICPS) says Libya holds the highest number of prisoners held without trial in the world at nearly 89 per-

cent. Foreign prisoners, many of them from sub-Saharan Africa, account for nearly 15 percent of Libya's prison population, and women for just over 2 percent. Nasseer Al Hammary, a researcher with the Libyan Observatory for Human Rights said that the human rights situation in Libya now was far worse than under Gaddafi.

[12] So the working class in Libya are on the brink of seizing power are they? Some 'unfinished revolution' with 'partial dual power' comrades of the Rcit!

Endnotes

[1] The Rcit statement is here: <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/liberation-struggle-and-imperialism/#ds>

[2] See Stuart King, *The anti-imperialist united front: a debate with the GOR*, 30/03/1986 – "Clearly here Trotsky does not limit the united front only to questions of 'military blocs' against the imperialists or the Warlords. Indeed such a position makes a non-Marxist division between 'politics' and 'war' – 'war is the continuation of politics by other means'."

King and the whole Workers Power family have in practice repudiated these correct positions because of their unprincipled line on Libya.

<http://www.fifthinternational.org/content/anti-imperialist-united-front-debate-gor>

[3] We invite readers to check the LCFI statement itself on page 36 and the article on page 14 to see that the equation of the LRCI position with that of the 'Spart family' and CPGB (ML) is totally unfounded. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/53607829/SocialistFightNo6-123>

[4] See Interviews with Wang Fanxi by Gregor Benton, "Wang repeats what he has described elsewhere, that is, that the position taken by their group – and by Trotsky – was not one of 'revolutionary defeatism'. The stated aim was to 'transform the war against the foreign invaders into a revolution to replace the leadership of the resistance war and thereby to assure the victory of the war against the

foreign invader...' This policy... was in line with Trotsky's declaration that the workers' organisations had to 'participate actively and in the front lines of the present war against Japan'. But because Chiang Kai-Shek could not assure a victory over the Japanese, the Trotskyists had to win prestige in the military struggle and the political struggle against the deficiencies and betrayals of the Guomindang." <http://revolutionaryhistory.co.uk/book-reviews/books/reviews/chinese-trotskyism.htm>.

[5] See Felix Morrow, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain*, New Park Publications. Earnest Mandel writes, "Felix Morrow's *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain* remains the best Marxist analysis of the Spanish revolution of 1936-37 and its tragic ending. Other works, written since and drawing upon extensive new source material, give a more detailed account of the events and struggles (social and political) which marked these dramatic years, and of those which led up to them. But none are equal, leave alone superior, to Morrow in their analysis of the basic class forces at work, the inevitable clash between them and the outcome of the contest, decided by the lack of revolutionary leadership or clear political consciousness on the part of the toiling masses." <http://www.marxists.org/archive/mandel/1974/xx/morrow.htm>

[6] The Workers' Party of Marxist Unification (Spanish: Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista, POUM; Catalan: Partit Obrer d'Unificació Marxista) was a Spanish communist political party formed during the Second Republic and mainly active around the Spanish Civil War. It was formed by the fusion of the Trotskyist Communist Left of Spain (Izquierda Comunista de España, ICE) and the Workers and Peasants' Bloc (BOC, affiliated with the Right Opposition) against the will of Leon Trotsky, with whom the former broke (Wiki).

[7] Anarchists played a central role in the fight against Francisco Franco during the Spanish Civil War. At the same time, a far-reaching social revolution spread throughout Spain, where land and factories were collectivized and controlled by the workers. All remaining social reforms ended in 1939 with the

victory of Franco, who had thousands of anarchists executed. Resistance to his rule never entirely died, with resilient militants participating in acts of sabotage and other direct action after the war, and making several attempts on the ruler's life. Their legacy remains important to this day, particularly to anarchists who look at their achievements as a historical precedent of anarchism's validity (Wiki).

[8] Paul Dundes Wolfowitz (born December 22, 1943) is a former United States Ambassador to Indonesia, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense, President of the World Bank, and former dean of the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. He is currently a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, working on issues of international economic development, Africa and public-private partnerships, and chairman of the US-Taiwan Business Council. He is a leading neoconservative. As Deputy Secretary of Defense, he was "a major architect of President Bush's Iraq policy and... its most hawkish advocate." (Wiki). In fact one of Imperialism's most important theoreticians.

[9] See Kosovo's "Mafia State" and Camp Bondsteel: Towards a permanent US military presence in south-east Europe April 14, 2012 By F.William Engdahl. "Hashim Thaci the current Kosovo Prime Minister, got his job, so to speak, through the US State Department". According to The Guardian, Tuesday 14 December 2010, Hashim Thaçi is identified as the boss of a network that began operating criminal rackets in the run-up to the 1998-99 Kosovo war, and has held powerful sway over the country's government since. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/14/kosovo-prime-minister-like-mafia-boss>.

[10] Libya Worse Off After NATO Takeover, June 26, 2012, <http://www.thenorthstar.info/?p=1043>

[11] <http://forums.carm.org/vbb/archive/index.php/t-116767.html>

[12] The abuse and mistreatment of prisoners in detention centres around the country, many of them run by militias, is an ongoing problem. <http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/10/shadow-fighting-erupts-over-gaddafi/>

Where We Stand – Socialist Fight EB

1. We stand with Karl Marx: 'The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves. The struggle for the emancipation of the working class means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies but for equal rights and duties and the abolition of all class rule' (The International Workingmen's Association 1864, General Rules).

2. The capitalist state consists, in the last analysis of ruling-class laws within a judicial system and detention centres overseen by the armed bodies of police/army who are under the direction and are controlled in acts of defence of capitalist property rights against the interests of the majority of civil society. The working class must overthrow the capitalist state and replace it with a workers' state based on democratic soviets/workers' councils to suppress the inevitable counter-revolution of private capitalist profit against planned production for the satisfaction of socialised human need.

3. We recognise the necessity for revolutionaries to carry out serious ideological and political struggle as direct participants in the trade unions (always) and in the mass reformist social democratic bourgeois workers' parties despite their pro-capitalist leaderships when conditions

are favourable. Because we see the trade union bureaucracy and their allies in the Labour party leadership as the most fundamental obstacle to the struggle for power of the working class, outside of the state forces and their direct agencies themselves, we must fight and defeat and replace them with a revolutionary leadership by mobilising the base against the pro-capitalist bureaucratic misleaders to open the way forward for the struggle for workers' power.

4. We are full in support of all mass mobilisations against the onslaught of this reactionary Con-Lib Dem coalition. However, whilst participating in this struggle we will oppose all policies which subordinate the working class to the political agenda of the petty-bourgeois reformist leaders of the Labour party and trade unions.

5. We recognise that class society, and capitalism as the last form of class society, is by its nature patriarchal. In that sense the oppression of women is different from all other forms of oppression and discrimination. Because this social oppression is inextricably tied to private property and its inheritance to achieve full sexual, social and economic freedom and equality for all we need to overthrow class society itself.

6. We fight racism and fascism. We support the right of

people to fight back against racist and fascist attacks by any means necessary. Self-defence is no offence! We support 'No Platform' for all fascists but never call on the capitalist state to ban fascist marches or parties; these laws would inevitably primarily be used against workers' organisations, as history has shown.

7. We oppose all immigration controls. International finance capital roams the planet in search of profit and Imperialist governments disrupts the lives of workers and cause the collapse of whole nations with their direct intervention in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan and their proxy wars in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc. Workers have the right to sell their labour internationally wherever they get the best price. Only union membership and pay rates can counter employers who seek to exploit immigrant workers as cheap labour to undermine the gains of past struggles.

Socialist Fight is in the Liaison Committee for the Fourth International with the Liga Comunista of Brazil and the Tendencia Militante Bolchevique of Argentina. It is produced by this Editorial Board:

Gerry Downing, Ray Rising, Charlie Walsh, Carol Foster, Ailish Dease, Laurence Humphries and Aggie McCallum.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

In the final chapter of this book (<http://logic.eserver.org/2009/Furr.pdf>) Grover Furr attempts a character assassination of Trotsky's son, Leon Sedov, based on the secret reports of Mark Zborowski to his NKVD (Stalinist secret police) handlers. Why one should place any reliance on the uncorroborated testimony of a hired assassin whose material financial interests were to tell his paymasters what they wanted to hear is a complete mystery. Here is the accurate assessment of the career of Zborowski from the 1975 book *Security and the Fourth International* by the International Committee of the Fourth International (p. 43).

"Mark Zborowski, the Stalinist agent inside the Fourth International, was responsible for inflicting terrible blows on the early Trotskyist movement. It was the hand of GPU agent Ramon Mercader, who drove an ice pick into Trotsky's skull in Mexico in August 1940, but the operation was master-minded in Paris where Zborowski was the centre of the Stalinist intrigue."

His sinister career covered: the theft of Trotsky's Russian archives from the Nicolaevsky Institute in Paris in 1936; the murder of Trotsky's son, Leon Sedov, in February 1938; the execution of two of Trotsky's secretaries, Rudolf Klement and Erwin Wolf; and the gunning down of the defector from the Stalinist regime, Ignace Reiss. Despite mounting suspicion of him in Paris, plus a warning letter sent to Trotsky by the NKVD defector, General Alexander Orlov, Zborowski remained at the top of the Paris bureau."

This is not to endorse the ICFI claim that leaders of the US SWP were agents of the CIA. That whole campaign of the late 1970s by the WRP and the International Committee of the Fourth International has yet to be reassessed to sort the wheat from the chaff.

Of course there is ample public evidence of Stalin's own collaboration with the Nazis. In compliance with one of the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact on 31 Dec 1939 at Brest Litovsk Stalin handed over several hundred German and Austrian Communists to Hitler's Reich, both Jews and non-Jews, who had found refuge in the U.S.S.R. before World War II. We know their fate.

The following refutation article is from Mike Ely on the Kasama blog (<http://kasamaproject.org/2010/10/04/three-quick-examples-of-leftist-pseudo-science/>). It is written from a Maoist standpoint as is evident in the concluding remarks.

However it does the job of refuting the methodology employed by Furr and other conspiracy theorists very well. The methodology of Trotskyism vs. Maoism/Marxism/Leninism (in all its varieties) is another task for a later date. Of central importance here is the Maoist theory of the qualitative difference between the nationalist and comprador bourgeoisie in the semi-colonial world.

For the details of Stalinist betrayals of the German working class see:

Fascism in Germany, Robin Blick 1975, Appendix III: History Falsified

<http://www.marxists.org/subject/fascism/blink/appendix03.htm#n34>

Refutation of Prof. Grover Furr's Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan

Extract from Three Quick Examples of Leftist Pseudo-Science By Mike Ely on Kasama Blog 4/10/ 2010

The documents by Grover Furr I have been reading on Soviet history form another set of examples. Grover is a long time communist, English professor and amateur historian. He has undertaken a project to prove that the original Soviet explanations of the purges and purge trials are being factually substantiated by real evidence (including the materials in the Soviet archives).

Having a particular interest in Soviet history and being urged by a good friend to engage Grover, I have read his stuff. I have to say it is one of the most astonishing projects of pseudo-research I have seen (outside of creationist anti-evolution efforts). I am thinking in particular of one major document by Grover, *"Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan."* It appeared in *Cultural Logic* for 2009, and it appears on Grover's site with the simple claim:

"On the evidence there's no doubt that Trotsky conspired with the Germans and Japanese as alleged during the second and third Moscow Trials of January 1937 and March 1938."

What follows (when you print and read his piece) is virtually every kind of logical fallacy we have listed above. There is in fact, no evidence that Trotsky "conspired with the Germans and Japanese as alleged." And what is alleged is after all both major and very specific: That Trotsky was a paid agent of the fascists, that he conspired to overthrow socialism, kill the communist leaders and help carve up the Soviet Union between the various Axis powers!

I want to say, in passing, that Grover does occasionally debunk the most extreme and deceitful anticommunist claims. There are lots of ridiculous charges (example: that Stalin deliberately unleashed famine in the Ukraine as a form of genocide against Ukrainian people). And Grover does help refute them in some of his documents. But his other delusional work discredits such refutations.

In his specific and most energetic claims (i.e. that the official Soviet allegations in the show trials were credible and proven) Grover has to fall back on misdirection. The only evidence of those old school purge-trial charges remains the



Unregenerate Stalinist Grover Furr of the English Department, Montclair State University. His works include *The Sixty-One Untruths of Nikita Khrushchev*. In interview in the *Georgian Times* on 20.11.09 he claims, "The (post WWII) Ed Deportation of Nationalities was Excusable".

"evidence" presented in those trials: the confessions of men in prison, men who facing death penalties, fear for their families and possible torture. If one has a sceptical attitude toward confessions under such conditions, then there is no other evidence of the core allegations.

Grover's writings do everything we've been discussing:

For example they prove (in great detail) that Trotsky and others formed a political group with a specific program, and alliances, and sought to struggle for their line (and for the replacement of the party currents that were then in power). In other words, he proves that there was a political opposition (or rather several) within the CPSU(B) and its various levels.

But, that is obvious to everyone and does not need proving. And by proving the existence of a political opposition you have not proven that Leon Trotsky worked for the Nazis. It is (as the "fallacies" document discusses) an example of red herring, non sequitor, slippery slope exaggeration.

That method appears over and over in much of Grover's work — he documents and proves all kinds of things with baroque flourishes of detail, but just not what he claims to have proven.

While Grover claims to have evidence, a lot of

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

his case revolves around a “special pleading” about why there actually is no real evidence. He argues that the conspirators would not have written anything down, and evidence would have been carefully destroyed, and so on.

But in fact, it is not possible for a major conspiracy and spy network riddled the Soviet Union in service to the Axis government without some evidence (if only in Nazi records) — conferences, reports, directives, funding records... as the news of this conspiracy went up and down the Nazi chain of command.

The fact that six decades of historical research (including into German, Japanese and Soviet government archives) has not produced any evidence of a vast complex espionage operation (of the kind the Soviets alleged) shows that there was no such operation.

The Trotskyist opposition was a political line struggle within the ruling Soviet party. Their political program may well have been disastrous (and I believe it was), but the Stalin-era assertion that oppositionists were secret Nazis was wrong (politically, theoretically and factually) — even if Stalin himself may have believed it and then demanded that subordinates document it.

Grover also makes a classic “excluded middle” argument: by saying that anyone opposing his arguments is therefore clearly influenced by the anticommunist arguments — as if these historical matters exist on a simple binary grid where you either agree with Vyshinsky (channelled through Grover Furr) or take your side with Robert Conquest. And so in Grover’s work, other analyses of these events (by scholars known for not being anti-communist) don’t make much of an appearance.

Grover also lavishly argues using “weasel words,” “proof by verbosity” (seemingly endless verbosity) and “appeal to authority” (both his own and Stalin’s).

I’m particularly struck by the argument (that has appeared in various places) that we have to accept Grover’s scholarly authority because he has spent years on this mission, read in the Soviet archives personally, and because we don’t ourselves speak Russian in order to dissect the primary material. This is all logically false.

First, Grover is hardly the only person who had plumbed those archives — and there are major works that provide many key documents in English so that we can all explore key and revealing sections of the primary material. I’m thinking, in particular, of J. Arch Getty’s *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*.

Further, those communists who defended the purges and show trials “down the line” were (for sixty years) totally disinterested in data and evidence — and were rather militant about proclaiming their beliefs without evidence. They didn’t care about evidence. And for someone to claim now (suddenly) that none of us (not one) has any right to an opinion here without learning Russian (!) and spending years in Moscow archives...because we (supposedly) just don’t know the evidence...

And at the same time, to claim that the massive evidence against their own theories must be permanently suspect (because it comes from KGB controlled archives). Well, the switcheroos and double-think are a bit much to bear. (our emphasis—Ed)

It is not as if the Russian archives are a new thing — they have been open for literally decades. Or as if no honest man (other than Grover Furr) has gone there. If there was really any new real evidence establishing the existence of a big world-circling Nazi-Trotsky network of spies and assassins — don’t you think it would have leaked into public view?

It has even been mentioned in discussion that Grover Furr has gotten publicity for his views within the modern Russian press where interviews with him are published. So? That is an example of the logical fallacy called “the bandwagon effect” — and I have to add that getting a theory promoted in the Russian media is hardly evidence of credibility. Russian politics is notorious for its love of crackpot and paranoid theories of many kinds (especially if they, unlike Grover’s theories, have an anti-Semitic underbelly).

It would take a month to dissect Grover’s article on the Trotsky-Nazi connection, and unravel all the various levels of misdirection. But the fact remains that there is not embedded in it any piece of evidence (at all!) that documents his claims.

I have asked him (several times) to simply email me a one or two sentence message that mentions the single fact that he believes best documents this alleged conspiracy. And I’m still waiting. We don’t actually need seventy pages of hemming and hawing — a one paragraph description of one real documented fact would suffice to put Grover’s theory on a different plane (a report in a Nazi file, a pay stub, a memoir from one of the architects of the conspiracy, one eye witness account that isn’t a prisonhouse confession... one simple real piece of evidence of any kind of the actual allegations that Grover says are confirmed.)

Here too the issue really is line and avoidance of line:



Grover Furr defends the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939 (above, under Lenin’s portrait!) as a pure Russian chauvinist totally innocent of any revolutionary aspirations — “Thus, all what the Soviet Government actually did, beginning from September 17 on, was in fact the reunification of the Western Belorussian and Western Ukrainian peoples with the majority of their brothers living in the U.S.S.R., and the retrieval of our lands which were wrested by Pilsudski’s Poland in 1920 from our country”. Furr also defends the deportations of many of these ‘peoples’ post war because they had become counter-revolutionaries!

Stalin claimed that antagonist classes had disappeared in the 1930s Soviet Union and so the only material basis for widespread opposition was the actions of old class elements who had wormed their way into power in close alliance with paid agents of foreign enemies. It is a particular theory about the political oppositions within the Communist Party.

Mao by contrast (based on an assessment of both Stalin’s theories and Soviet history) concluded that there was a material basis within socialism and within the Communist Party for “capitalist roaders” to emerge and contend for power. It is an opposing theory. By announcing that the official Soviet explanation for their purges were factually correct, Grover is making a statement on a crucial (dare I say world historic) question of “where do the forces of capitalist restoration come from?”

And he does so in the guise of an objective scholarly exploration of historical evidence — and so does not engage his own views of this theoretical question, and does not seriously engage the Maoist counter-position.

It is a two-line struggle over a major question waged (among communists) using a method of bogus factual “proof” based on bogus claims of obscure evidence.

Grover Furr, reply to Mike Ely's critique of 'Evidence.. Trotsky's Collaboration' article in Socialist Fight

My reply concerns matters of method and evidence rather than conclusions, which in historical work are always contingent. Interested readers may download my published research on the Stalin period from my Home Page, <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/>, Mike Ely (ME) attempts to critique my article "Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan" <http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/Furr.pdf>

I did not learn of ME's criticism when it appeared on his blog in October 2010. But others did. I recommend a few of these posts. * #51, by "Radical-Eyes", who defends my work and reproduces a discussion of mine about how to analyze evidence: <http://tinyurl.com/radeyes-evidence>, * #68, by "Krapsama", who reproduces relevant parts of an earlier article of mine: <http://tinyurl.com/krapsamaquotesfurr> I also recommend posts #14, #22, #37, #39, #41, #43, and #54 by Joseph Ball, and #31 and #57 by "Krapsama."

ME attacked my work again in May 2011 and agreed to permit a response. My posts concerning questions of evidence are:

<http://tinyurl.com/replyeli01>, <http://tinyurl.com/refuteeli01>, <http://tinyurl.com/refutedavidson01>, <http://tinyurl.com/replydavidson02>, <http://tinyurl.com/replydavidson03>, <http://tinyurl.com/replypsm01>.

Briefly:

* We have a lot of circumstantial evidence that Trotsky collaborated with the Germans and Japanese.

* It is invalid to "throw out" or discount any of it.

* As is always the case, each individual piece of evidence can be "explained" in multiple ways.

* When there are enough individual pieces of circumstantial evidence, and one interpretation or explanation is common to all of them, then that interpretation becomes highly probable.

Two hypotheses are reasonable. Hypothesis #1: Trotsky did in fact collaborate with the Germans and Japanese, as the evidence suggests. Or hypothesis #2: All this evidence is faked in some way; that is, forged; or "dictated" by NKVD investigators to helpless defendants under threat or promise.

The latter hypothesis presupposes the existence of a conspiracy to concoct a phony case against Trotsky. But the existence of this conspiracy cannot just be "assumed". For the hypothesis to stand there must be evidence of this conspiracy -- and there is none. Therefore, unless and until sufficient evidence of such a conspiracy should come to light, we are forced to conclude that Hypothesis #1 is the correct one. We are compelled to conclude that, on the evidence, Leon Trotsky conspired with the Germans and Japanese.

Objections to this conclusion can be due to ignorance of how to consider evidence. Most people

have never given serious thought to questions of evidence in historical investigation.

However, in my experience most objections stem from a lack of objectivity which takes the form of denial. Many people who have preconceived ideas about a subject find it impossible to decide such matters on the evidence alone. To do so would be too disruptive of their personal or political allegiances and commitments. Not all such people are Trotskyists. ME is a Maoist. And for mainstream anticommunist historians the theory that Trotsky was "framed" by Stalin is compulsory; no other conclusion is acceptable for publication.

In 1980 Pierre Broué, the most accomplished Trotskyist historian of his day, discovered that a "bloc" of Rights, Zinovievites, Trotskyites, and other oppositionists had indeed been formed with Trotsky's blessing in 1932. The existence of this bloc was an important part of the Prosecution's case, and of many defendants' confessions, at the three Moscow Trials of 1936, 1937, and 1938. Trotsky consistently and vehemently denied that such a bloc existed.

Broué also accepted as genuine Mark Zborowski's reports in which the NKVD agent discussed Leon Sedov's endorsement of "terror" (assassination) against Stalin, something he and his father always stoutly denied.

Broué was objective enough to concede that Trotsky lied about these two important matters. But he was not objective enough to pursue the implications. Other researchers such as Arch Getty and Sven-Eric Holmström, have found other lies by Trotsky. This means that nothing Trotsky said or wrote -- especially, his denials -- should be taken at face value.

Briefly, on two more points from the Editor's Column:

1. There is good evidence that Leon Sedov was not murdered. Interested readers should consult John Costello and Oleg Tsarev, *Deadly Illusions* (1993), p. 284 and note on pp. 469-70. Tsarev obtained access to NKVD reports of Zborowski's that have since been reclassified.

2. The story that "German and Austrian communists" were "handed over" to the Nazis by Stalin comes from the autobiography of Margarete Buber-Neumann, who says that there were not "several hundred" but 30, and that it occurred on February 7, 1940, not December 31, 1939.

Buber-Neumann and the other deportees she names were convicted at trial of involvement in Trotskyist conspiracies. By 1936 the Soviets considered Trotskyists to be not communists but criminals. It is disingenuous to claim that "Stalin handed over communists to Hitler" without explaining this.

We can't know whether and of what they were guilty until, at the very least, we can examine their trial transcripts and investigative materials. This the Russian government does not currently permit. There is a little evidence on Heinz Neumann available, all of which points towards his guilt. More evidence might cause us to reverse this conclusion, which is tentative, as all historical

judgments should be.

But without a determination to look at all the evidence objectively, we can never discover the truth. Sadly, many people on the Left vastly prefer their cherished preconceived ideas to the truth, which is often disillusioning.

Comments on this by Socialist Fight

Grover Furr just does not concern himself with evidence at all, just that 'evidence' extracted under torture and threats by the NKVD during the Moscow trials. The fact that this is self-contradictory does not bother him either or that no serious historian today can defend these monstrous frame-ups and lies. He attempts an amalgam, Trotsky had supporters in the USSR and contacts with others whom he tried to persuade of his political case. Instead of acknowledging this simple fact, which is all Broué acknowledges, Grover asserts that it proves the existence of a "bloc" of Rights, Zinovievites, Trotskyites. From this to being paid agents for Hitler and the Mikado is a small step if you controlled such a monstrous terror machine as Stalin did.

And Trotsky 'lied' by not revealing to Stalin all his contacts in the USSR so Stalin could murder them, therefore Trotsky is a liar, we cannot trust a word he says. This from the man who defends the Hitler Stalin pact of 1939, who justifies jailings, exiling and handing over to the Nazis of communists from Germany and Spain. These communists had been loyal followers of Stalin but knew too much for Stalin who had made his counter-revolutionary pact with Hitler in 1939 and another equally counter-revolutionary one after the war with 'democratic' Imperialism in Potsdam, Teheran and Yalta. Not to mention the deportation of entire nationalities post-war on the basis that they were 'counter-revolutionaries' and 'nationalists'. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Population_transfer_in_the_Soviet_Union

It is now beyond question that Marc Zborowski murdered Leon Sedov. See *The Venona Secrets: Exposing Soviet Espionage and America's Traitors* By Herbert Romerstein, Eric Breindel for a detailed account if the expose of the ICFI on the matter is rejected as too partisan.

The source of the story about Brest Litovsk is some data from some articles in the Encyclopaedia Judaica 1971 from Michael Palomino (2007), http://www.geschichteinchronologie.ch/judentum-aktenlage/hol/EncJud_Stalin-deportations-Barbarossa-flight-ENGL/01-Holocaust-rescue-from.html

Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria were treated as "enemy citizens" and sent to forced labour camps. (col. 910)

[31 Dec 1939: Brest Litovsk: Stalin hands over German and Austrian Communists to Hitler's Reich]

An event which typifies the Soviet policy of ignoring the Nazi attitude toward the Jews occurred on Dec. 31, 1939, at Brest Litovsk. In this city the Soviets handed over to the Gestapo several hundred Communist activists from Germany and Austria, both Jews and non-Jews, who had found refuge in the U.S.S.R. before World War II. (col. 908)

The True Levellers or Diggers and the emergence of Communism in Britain during the latter part of the English Revolution 1648-1651, Part 1

By Laurence Humphries

Historical materialism

Class society in Britain during the early 1640s was experiencing a severe economic crisis. Britain was largely a land-owning and agricultural country with small capitalist enterprises and workshops with artisans and journeymen. Journeymen were the mere appendages of the yeomanry of small masters. This period is noted for the struggle between the Monarchy and Parliament and the establishment of the Republic from 1649-1660. There were two parties in the House of Commons, the Presbyterians (Landowners) and the Independents (squires, gentry lawyers and merchants). Oliver Cromwell was a squire and a member of the Independents.

There were large divisions between rich and poor exacerbated by Enclosure of common land by the landowning class. "There is a permanent background of potential unrest, large scale unemployment, breakdown of government disorder might occur as it did in 1607" [1]. These were the enclosure riots. The continuing battle by parliament to check the power of the king and defend its own interests. Land was the decisive factor. The gentry were becoming more and more alienated from aristocratic rule. *"Marx spoke of the poor laws as the means by which the agricultural people first forcibly expropriated were driven from their homes, turned into vagabonds and then whipped, branded tortured by laws grotesquely terrible into the discipline necessary for the wages system"* [2].

The Presbyterian party in parliament led by Lord Essex and Lord Manchester were for more parliamentary control of the King. They wanted a constitutional monarch checked by the power of parliament. The Independents led by Pym and Hampden and supported by republicans like Cromwell, Ireton and Marten wanted the King to surrender to parliament. Farm Labourers, artisans and the poor were not represented in parliament. The gentry and the squires were the closest to representing the democratic interests in parliament. The English revolution is a class struggle between the monarchy and parliament represented by squires, the yeomanry, lawyers and merchants. The civil war started in 1641 at Edge hill when the King and his advisors refused to discuss with parliament. The civil war ended at Naseby in Northamptonshire in 1645. Charles sought help from the Scots and was defeated and arrested at Preston. During the first Civil war Cromwell, Fairfax and Ireton broke with Essex and Manchester and created "The New Model army". This was an Army of professional soldiers, composed of Artisans, farm labourers "The middling sort of men". This army was a proletarian army who fought against the aristocracy and the bourgeois.

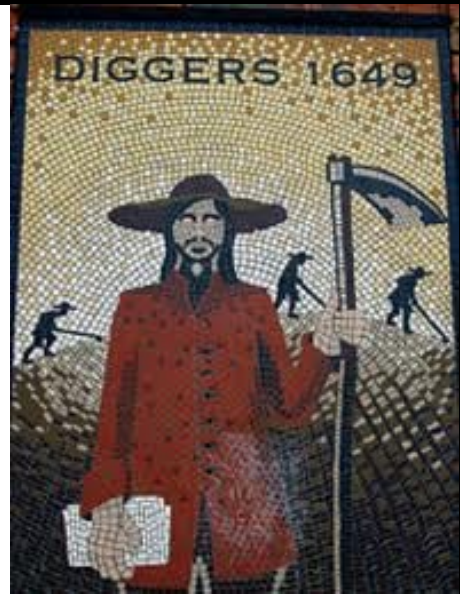
In 1646 elements in the army mainly the agitators took control and demanded rights and a document called "The agreement of the people" was drawn up as well as "a Grand Remonstrance". Presbyterian leaders connived to protect the King and wanted to disband the army. Parliament prevaricated and in 1648 Colonel Thomas Pride marched into Parliament and arrested Presbyterian leaders and ensured that there would be no more negotiations with the King. This was called "Pride's Purge". Parliament was referred to as "The Rump".

The Levellers a movement amongst craftsmen, artisans and small craftsmen drew up a charter of rights.

- Annual Parliaments
- Freedom of conscience
- Equality before the Law.

It was the sovereignty of the people and manhood suffrage that Leveller leaders like Lilburne, Walwyn and Marten fought for. The Levellers were the left wing of the democratic movement in the army and were opposed to the Army Grandees of Cromwell, Fairfax and Ireton. The Leveller movement emerged in the army and put their demands to the Grandees at Burford Church in Putney in 1647. Craftsmen and agitators like Thomas Rainsborough, Cornet Joyce and John Wildman debated with Cromwell, Fairfax and Ireton the rights of the common people for manhood suffrage. *"Constitutional levellers were the radical left wing of the revolutionary party the Independents"* [3]. Ireton Cromwell's son in law challenged the Levellers at Burford *"a doctrine of natural rights would lead to communism"* [4] *"The Levellers suggested that Parliament should be made representative of the free people. Some Levellers excluded paupers and wage labourers from the free people"* [5]. *"The fact that the most radical political party (Levellers) even of the revolutionary decades excluded over half the male population and all women"* [6].

There was no agreement between the agitators and the grandees. Cromwell terminated the debates at Putney and ordered the agitators back to their regiments. The Leveller revolt was over, many Levellers were arrested and some were executed. On 30th January 1649 Charles 1st was executed and a Republic was declared. The Levellers still continued to fight on. They were the democratic wing who advocated natural rights and manhood suffrage but rejected communism. They embraced private property and looked back to the Norman yoke and Anglo Saxon rights against the Normans in the 12th Century. *"On the contrary they expressed the outlook of small men of property. They sharply differentiated themselves from "the diggers" who advocated a communist programme and began communal cultivation of land at S Geor-*



"Gerrard Winstanley was the fiery soul of the Digger movement. In the history of English social thought he is considered the first sectarian Communist."

ges Hill in 1649" [7]. The big distinction between the Levellers and the Diggers was on the issue of private property *"The Leveller petition of 11th September repudiated any idea of abolishing property, levelling estates or making all common"* [8].

In December 1648 Gerrard Winstanley announced his communism when a group of his supporters started digging the common land in Digger communities at St Georges, Wellingborough in Northants, Coxhall in Kent, Barnet in Herts Enfield in Middlesex Dunstable in Bedfordshire and Bosworth in Leicestershire. *"Winstanley spoke for those whom the constitutional Levellers would have disenfranchised, servants, labourers and paupers"* [9].

"Constitutional Levellers then were not in fundamental disagreement (with the Grandees). The sanctity of property and their desire to extend democracy was within the limits of capitalist society" [10]. The Digger movement was non-violent and had no support from the army or the constitutional Levellers. They had a utopian view of society, they hoped that other people would form communities with private property or wage labour. *"The digger colony of St Georges Hill was intended to be the first stage in a sort of General Strike against wage labour"* [11]. The Diggers were utopian in that they believed by digging or using the waste lands, forests and parks that were enclosed that the Grandees and Cromwell would not evict them. Cromwell asserted the right of private property and the enclosure of common land. The Diggers in 1650 were defeated and were evicted from their

communities or just left. They believed that communism, tilling the soil and working together would be the solution of Society's ills. Winstanley had great foresight. They failed to appreciate that capitalist society after the Cromwellian Revolution would combat communism and treat it as its mortal enemy. The working class had not emerged and there were no organisations like Friendly societies or Trade Unions to organise the poor. This would emerge in the period following the English Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries.

"It would appear unlikely that scattered unorganised and undernourished Labourers and artisans would have the capacity or the political consciousness to undertake Revolutionary action to establish a new economic social and political order" [12]. "The sketch of a classless society that follows (Winstanley's Law of Freedom and other writings) is a deeply interesting blend of radical democracy professed by the main body of the Levellers with the Communism of More's Utopia" [13].

"Thus two centuries before Marx Winstanley in the simplest of plain English in (The Law of Freedom) dared to say that Religion is the opium of

the people" [14]

To conclude Winstanley and the diggers were a revolutionary movement of proletarians during the 17th century. Their communism was based on utopian ideals particularly the bible. They believed that this was their solution to the poverty surrounding them. There was no organisation to support them in their universal campaign to till the soil, work together and share. Because of their utopian and non-violent beliefs the Diggers were unprepared to deal with emerging capitalism. Winstanley and his followers believed that by example everyone would allow them to continue practising their communism. Communism would need a scientific and materialist basis which was to be developed by Marx and Engels in the 19th century. Their tradition was not lost. In the 18th century Thomas Spence would advance a theory of agrarian communism. As the working class developed from the 1780s-1830s corresponding societies would emerge. They are the embryo of Trade union organisation which would lead in the 1890s to revolutionary implications. The ideas of Marx and Engels would be crucial in understanding how the emancipation of the working class could be put on a scientific basis. In Part 2 I will

consider Thomas Spence and the radical Milieu of Cobbett, Paine, Hunt and the corresponding societies.

Endnotes

[1] Hill C *Puritanism and Revolution Studies in the Interpretation of the English Revolution* p 205

[2] Hill, C, *Century of Revolution* p26

[3] Hill, C, *World Turned upside Down*

[4] Hill, C, *Century of Revolution* p129

[5] Hill, *Century of Revolution* p175

[6] Hill, C, *Century of Revolution* p175

[7] Hill, C, *Century of Revolution* p129

[8] Hill, C, *World Turned Upside Down* p119

[9] Hill, C, *World Turned upside Down* p 121

[10] Hill, C, *World Turned Upside Down* p123

[11] Manning, B, 1649 *Crisis of the English Revolution* p119

[12] Manning, B, 1649 *Crisis of the English Revolution*

[13] Brailsford, H, *The Levellers and the English Revolution* p659

[14] Brailsford, H, *The Levellers and the English Revolution* p669

Democratic Socialist Movement Executive Committee Statement October 26, 2012 (extracts)

1. The DSM strongly rejects the allegations by the Congress of South African Trade Unions General Secretary, Zwelinzima Vavi, at a press conference on Saturday 20th October 2012, that the DSM instigated the stoning of his car at the Orkney Mine in Klerksdorp on Friday 19th October 2012. These allegations are false, unsubstantiated and irresponsible. More reprehensible are the allegations of the National Union of Mineworkers leadership on SAFM's morning show, on Friday, 18th October, that the DSM is responsible for the murder of their shop stewards.

2. We demand the withdrawal of the allegations by the SACP-linked Communist University internet forum (CU), that the DSM is linked to the apartheid killers that carried out the Boipatong massacre, and the Alexandra and KwaZulu-Natal atrocities during the struggle against apartheid.

3. We demand an end to the sinister CU targeting of the DSM by placing members' information on the internet including names, telephone numbers, employment details and photographs – amounting to a hit list and an invitation to assassinate DSM members. We call upon Cosatu, NUM and the SACP to condemn this reckless endangerment of DSM members' lives.

...6. The Cosatu/NUM leaders are the architects of their own demise. As the Marikana Commission of inquiry's latest evidence confirms, the NUM leadership stood on the other side of the class barriers, actively colluded with the mining bosses, denouncing the demands and the actions of their own members, and called for the ANC to help end the strike and for the police to smash it.

...9. We also call on Cosatu to reconsider the basis for holding the (at?) Rustenburg a rally on 27th October 2012. To rally to "reclaim Rustenburg from counter-revolutionaries" is tantamount to a declaration of war on the striking miners and will almost certainly result in worker-to-worker confrontation and possible violence. To proceed on this basis, especially with ANC secretary general, Gwede Mantashe, as one of the main speakers, is provocative....

Socialist Fight Emergency Motion to Labour Representation Committee on 10 November on this statement:

This AGM of the LRC calls on the entire Labour movement to defend the democratic rights of the Democratic Socialist Movement of South Africa from the activities of the SACP-linked Communist University internet forum (CU).

We reject the allegation that this working class socialist movement is "linked to the apartheid killers that carried out the Boipatong massacre, and the Alexandra and KwaZulu-Natal atrocities during the struggle against apartheid". We also deplore the "placing members' information on the internet including names, telephone numbers, employment details and photographs – amounting to a hit list and an invitation to assassinate DSM members. We call upon Cosatu, NUM and the SACP to condemn this reckless endangerment of DSM members' lives."

Despite many and various political differences with the DSM (the South African section of the Committee for a Workers International) by the LRC membership we recognise that we must close ranks and defend these Comrades against these vile threats. The striking South African miners are the vanguard of the international proletariat and those who fight their cause must be defended at all costs. We must never again allow violence and assassinations of political opponents to take the place of political struggle, as it did in the 1930s. The language of SACP deputy general secretary Jeremy Cronin, describing the striking workers as "Pondoland vigilante mafias" and condemning the DSM as "counter-revolutionaries" clearly prepares for violent attacks.

Message from the Revolutionary Marxist Group of SA

Dear Comrade Gerry

We are pleased to see that you have taken on the task of garnering support for the DSM in South Africa who are under severe attack by the ANC/SACP/COSATU alliance. In our view the organisation by these forces to regain Rustenburg from the 'counterrevolution' is a reflection of an insidious and incremental Bonapartism. Nay more, the role of the COSATU leadership as the political leadership of this quasi-fascistic attack on the revolutionary mine workers and the DSM in particular, reflects a new phase in the history of the working class movement in South Africa.

We fully support your call for organisations to endorse this statement, and we will also send a message of support to the DSM. Our comrades are involved side by side with the DSM comrades in the co-ordinating strike committee in Rustenburg, and while not being high profile leaders they have participated fully in the strike struggle. While we may not agree with everything the DSM stands and fights for, including some of their methods, they are the closest political organisation to our own, and for a while now we have considered 'blocking' with them on various issues.

Comradely Greetings, RMG Central Committee

Socialist Fight: For an International Solidarity Campaign with the striking mineworkers of South Africa

The striking miners of South Africa are the vanguard of the international proletariat. The brutal and pre-planned massacre of the 34 miners on 16th August is a sharp manifestation of the International crisis of capitalism that began its latest phase in the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the US in 2007/8. Every class conscious workers on the planet has a duty to support and work for the victory of this strike because they are fighting not just for the future of the South African working class but for all our futures. The attack on the Marikana strikers is an attack on the global working class and we must respond globally to it.

Capitalism is an outmoded and archaic system, since the start of the twentieth century in its Imperialist form it has brought wars and revolutions; it can do no other; that is its very essence. Lonmin's Marikana mine is owned by global finance capital; this parasitic mode of production is protected by the African National Congress (ANC) government of Jacob Zuma, by the South African Communist party (SACP), by the leaders of the Confederation of South African Trades Unions (Cosatu) and most appallingly by the leaders of the National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa (NUM). That is why the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union of South Africa (AMCU) had to lead the strike.

Reuters Africa reported on 29 August that South African Mines Minister Susan Shabangu had assured a gathering of mining executives and African officials in Perth, Australia that, "South Africa's institutions provide protection for foreign investors in the resources sector."

Then quoting her directly,

"We urge our investors, incumbent and prospective, to take comfort in the solid foundation set by our constitution, government, legal and civil institutions... The president and people of South Africa are determined to isolate bad elements in our society that are seemingly committed to undermine the democratic gains of the country to date".

According to the New York Times, "Frans Baleni, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, defended the police in an interview with Kaya FM, a radio station" saying that "The police were patient, but these people were extremely armed with dangerous weapons."

As the statement issued by the Revolutionary Marxist Group on August 2012 says,

"The treacherous role of the NUM leadership is not accidental. The miners' union has been a major conduit for the black political and economic elite in the democratic capitalist South Africa. Cyril Ramaphosa, Kgalema Motlanthe, Gwede Mantashe all once held the position of general-secretary of NUM. James Motlatsi is a former NUM president. Ramaphosa moved from

NUM, into the upper echelons of the ANC and then into business. Like Motlanthe, he is a presidential hopeful. He and Motlatsi are presently at the helm of the Shanduka Group with holdings in mining, energy, financial services, property, telecommunications, industrial and fast-moving consumer goods. Shanduka holds strategic stakes in 22 companies including Standard Bank, Liberty, Bidvest, Lonmin, Mondi, Coca-Cola Shanduka Beverages and McDonald's SA.

It also holds an 18% stake in Lonmin! Marcel Golding was once Deputy General-Secretary of NUM, then became an ANC MP, director of the NUM Investment and is presently director of Hosken Consolidated Investments, the owners of ETV. These powerful people personify the ANC's shift from a radical petty-bourgeois nationalist liberation movement to a bourgeois nationalist ruling party that protects the interests of the black bourgeoisie, the White monopoly capitalists in South Africa and British-based and other foreign companies such as Lonmin."

This brings out in the clearest manner two closely inter-related phenomenon which have manifest themselves increasingly sharply since the initiation of the present crisis of capitalism in 2007;

1. International finance capital is driven by this crisis to launch the most vicious attacks on the living standards and rights of the working class everywhere to restore its rate of profit. Lonmin is a British firm with strong Chinese capital. The following has been gleaned from various internet sources to show the complexity of global finance capital's penetration of the South African economy and the increasing importance of Chinese Imperialism in this.

The Gold One group is majority-owned by a consortium comprising Baiyin Non-Ferrous Group Co. Limited, the China-Africa Development Fund, and Long March Capital Limited. Baiyin Nonferrous Group Co. Ltd. was formally established by Baiyin Company and China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC). CAD Fund (China-Africa Development Fund) is the first fund in China focusing on investment in Africa and also to encourage and support further Chinese Enterprises to invest in Africa to promote the development of Sino-African commercial.

Long March Capital is a relatively small financial services firm, believed to be based in Texas with around US\$1.7 in assets. In May 2011, according to a Chinese source, it was said to have combined forces with the China Development Bank and the CITIC Group to purchase almost 75% of Gold One International Limited, an Australian-listed company, active in Africa [SinoCast, 17 May 2011]. However, the Mining Journal gave a somewhat different version of the deal, saying the consortium, bidding to take over the mining company, is led by China's Baiyin Non-Ferrous



James Motlatsi, one of the most odious of the Capitalist Kleptocracy, is a former president of the National Union of Mineworkers. He is now the deputy chairman of AngloGold Ashanti. He is also the executive chairman of TEBA Limited, an major agency subcontractor which provides workers for the mines at slave labour rates.

Group Co Ltd (60%), while the China-Africa Development Fund holds 30% and Long March Capital has 10%.

This gives some indication of the international tie-ups that the South African state (ANC directed) has with external capital. The executive board of GOLD ONE INT. does not have one Chinese face on it, but they, nevertheless, execute the mining operations and labour-power, directly from outside SA.

2. International finance capital has developed a powerful set of agencies within the workers movement internationally, Lenin's "Labour lieutenants of capital" who are their open agents in the interests of "peace, democracy, justice" and, in the case of South Africa, using the cover of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) as we see from the NUMSA statement:

"We maintain that the working class has a duty to safeguard the revolutionary independence and autonomy of the SACP, as the political insurance of the working class in the multi-class NDR, by having its key leadership, such as the general secretaries, full time in office, all the time and not immerse itself in the trappings of the capitalist state."

The "multi-class NDR" is the two stage revolution where the alliance of the SACP and Cosatu with the bourgeois nationalist ANC is justified. Only the working class organised under a revolutionary party can open the road to national revolution as part of the international world revolution which alone can solve each individual national economic, political and social problem.

Build an International Solidarity Campaign with the striking mineworkers of South Africa!

Raise an International fund to support all the Striking South African Miners!

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

Solidarity with Marikana Miners—We are all fighting the same enemy

By Ailish Dease 14/10/2012

On the 16th August 3,000 miners on a 'wildcat' strike at the UK owned (with Chinese capital) LONMIN Platinum mines in Marikana South Africa, were on a protest. They were demanding higher wages and better conditions.

South African Miners are the worst paid miners on this planet. Miners, who face death every day to make huge profits for the mining companies had to struggle because of the poverty and degrading conditions in which they live. They live in single room hovels and pay between R500 and R800 a month to rent these horrible shacks without any running water or sanitation or electricity. More than a third of miners were not employed by Lonmin they are employed through outsourced labour brokers, companies who pay considerably less. The ANC government responded to the strike with the worst massacre since the end of the apartheid regime.

The South African police force (SAPS) gunned down 34 people and seriously injured 78 others.

Autopsies have now revealed that the Miners were shot in the back.

S. Africa has 80 percent of the world's known platinum reserves. The mining sector is at the core of political, social and economic order in South Africa. The Directors of the mines pay themselves 20 million Rand each. The ANC investment arm, Chancellor House, has mining interests and the South African Communist Party (SACP), has a connection with a new platinum mine.

Matlotlo Trading 115 is a wholly owned subsidiary of Masincazelane Trust, the "social investment arm" of the SACP. It owns 10 per cent of Toboti Platinum at Kalkfontein. Matlotlo is in partnership in Kalkfontein with Impala Platinum. Implats has a 20 per cent stake in Toboti. An investigation is needed into the shareholding entities and their beneficiaries.

ANC NEC member and former NUM president Cyril Ramaphosa has a 18% share in LONMIN and is one of their executive directors. The Zuma and Mandela families have shares in the mines. So the ANC and its partners have a direct stake in the exploitation of the working class and a vested material interest in repressing the worker's uprising. This is the source of the irreconcilable con-

flict between the miners and the NUM, (the ANC-aligned trade union)

The LONMIN unrest has been blamed partly on rivalry between the main National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) after an eight-month union turf war. The NUM has not been willing to campaign for a living wage and so miners decided to sign up to the other union, the AMCU. During the strike, reps from the NUM and COSATU asked the police to intervene and to arrest the AMCU leaders. Several of the miners' leaders have been jailed.

The AMCU, which was representing most of the strikers, accused police of a massacre. The NUM defended the police actions. (Reuters Africa)

(If this massacre had happened in any other so called 'democracy' the Minister for police (Nathi Mthethwa) and Commissioner for Police (Riah Phiyega) would have had to resign immediately).

The ANC has focused on serving corporate interests, privatizing basic services and has FAILED to redistribute the land and wealth. 84% of S. African land is still in the hands of 12% of the population. The richest 10% account for almost half of the nation's consumption, a quarter of the population lives on less than \$2 a day. A quarter of the nation is unemployed.

The authorities have failed to provide housing, running water and sanitation, electricity etc. for the local communities, as a result there are almost daily protests in South Africa. In light of the uprising in Marikana, Zuma has used this opportunity to order an end to "illegal gatherings" which includes these protests.

The Massacre and the arrests and brutalization of the miners failed to break the strike, and Lonmin, having lost R15 million a day during the six week strike, decided to grant the miners a wage increase.

On the 8th September Lonmin finally made an offer that was acceptable to the miners. Although they did not get what they demanded, LONMIN was made to offer an 11-22% increase and a one off bonus. Lonmin also had to agree to take back all workers including those who were arrested and charged. Representatives from the ANC and the NUM have condemned the deal.



The police massacre in progress, checking the wounded and dead—to finish them off? "The Marikana massacre has exposed the ANC/Alliance "progressive" credentials as bogus".

The miners paid a heavy price over the long strike, during which 45 of their comrades were murdered by the barbaric ANC government, many more were seriously wounded and more than 279 arrested and charged for various crimes including murder. This victory won through bitter struggle confirmed their position as the vanguard of the global working class. Their example has shown workers everywhere that we should stand firm and fight and we will win. Their victory was all the more meaningful since COSATU had said that their demands were "unreasonable" and "unrealisable" and the murderous ANC thugs in government had called out the army to suppress the workers.

The so called "Communist" Party of South Africa had supported the police action against the miners. With these powerful forces against them, the Marikana miners fought back and won.

Since the victory at Marikana there has been mass strikes of miners and other sections of the working class. 75,000 workers in the mining sector are on strike in defiance of the mining corporations, the ANC and the official unions. They are demanding parity with the Lonmin miners and calling for the resignation of the NUM leadership at the mines. 39 percent of South African gold mines' capacity has been hit.

COSATU is now desperately trying to control the wave of strikes which has spread outside the "official" unions primarily the NUM which is the largest union in COSATU.

The Marikana massacre has exposed the ANC/Alliance "progressive" credentials as bogus. Now workers must build a political movement to install working class power as the only way to achieve the demands of the poor i.e. land and an end to wage slavery.

Facebook debate on the class nature of Stalin's "counterrevolutionary workers' state"

Jason Rising: September 22

Trotsky stressed that the contradiction embodied in a "counterrevolutionary workers' state" could not survive the coming war, but he was more right than he knew, for Stalin and the bureaucracy knew and felt the process Trotsky pointed to and those pressures increased the pace and scope of the degeneration of the revolution, culminating in the "preventative civil war" whose purge of any ties in the state to the revolutionary working class allowed the bureaucracy to not just survive the war, but play a key, if subordinate role, in securing the stability of imperialism's domination of the world. – Jason Rising (status on facebook home-page)

Andrew Pollack: interesting. Source?

Robert Rasta: Robert be careful what u ask for Andrew

Grac Chvs: Trotsky said that in one of the letters that make up 'In Defence of Marxism', though his point wasn't what Jason is trying to claim.

Grac Chvs: More importantly than that particular claim, however, is the method Trotsky displayed in Revolution Betrayed, where his description of the further degeneration, and ultimately counter-revolution, in the USSR matched the subsequent passage of history.

The only fundamental difference between the USSR of 1990, and the Soviet Russia of 1918 is the lack of political democracy for the working class. If the Soviet Union under Stalin is declared to be some variety of capitalist, that's fine, but at least be consistent with it. To say that, means to say that the working class took power, abolished the bourgeoisie, and became a kind of collective capitalist. So the October Revolution, in that sense, merely established the capitalist exploitation of the working class BY the working class. The workers state, therefore, was a capitalist. Nevertheless, there was no new ruling class under the rule of Stalin, so that state capitalist, therefore, was still a workers' state. At the end of the war, and for the next 45 years after it, there were no fundamental changes.

Ray Rising: A "counter-revolutionary workers' state" was never Trotsky's assertion - the 'socialised means of production workers' state' is not identified by the 'counter-revolutionary means of Stalinist politics' that's precisely where Burnham and Abern took Shachtman into opposition.

Ray Rising: The deductive method on top, used by Jason, is completely irrational from a Marxist standpoint. How could Trotsky's scientific assessment of Stalinism's trajectory, be more 'right' than he himself 'knew' - only AFTER the event of the war? Did Stalinism (in 3rd Int.) not facilitate the war, insofar as he allowed the Hitler state to take power through purposely fragmenting the German w/class and its parties from 1929-33? Why did Stalin make a 'pact with Nazi Germany in 1939' - if not to protect the 'caste bureaucracies' position atop the workers state? Stalinism never purposely degenerated the workers' state to help Imperialism - the policies they pursued were for and in their own bureaucratic interests in seeking to exist

beside Imperialism as 'non-predatory Socialism in one USSR'. The consequences of Stalinism were not the aims of Stalinism - what it began doing in 1924 was never envisaged or 'planned' as potentially leading to what happened in Germany 1933, Spain 1936 or the European war-theatre after 1939.

Richard Brenner: Ray: that *was* Trotsky's assertion, and explicitly so.

Ray Rising: Tell us where Trotsky said that Mr Brenner.

Richard Brenner: Here. Now admit your error.

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/idom/dm/04-again.htm>

Richard Brenner "A Counter-Revolutionary Workers' State"

"Some voices cry out: 'If we continue to recognize the USSR as a workers' state, we will have to establish a new category: the counter-revolutionary workers' state.' This argument attempts to shock our imagination by opposing a good programmatic norm to a miserable, mean, even repugnant reality. But haven't we observed from day to day since 1923 how the Soviet state has played a more and more counter-revolutionary role on the international arena? Have we forgotten the experience of the Chinese Revolution, of the 1926 general strike in England and finally the very fresh experience of the Spanish Revolution? There are two completely counter-revolutionary workers' internationals. These critics have apparently forgotten this 'category.' The trade unions of France, Great Britain, the United States and other countries support completely the counterrevolutionary politics of their bourgeoisie. This does not prevent us from labelling them trade unions, from supporting their progressive steps and from defending them against the bourgeoisie. Why is it impossible to employ the same method with the counter-revolutionary workers' state? In the last analysis a workers' state is a trade union which has conquered power. The difference in attitude in these two cases is explainable by the simple fact that the trade unions have a long history and we have become accustomed to consider them as realities and not simply as 'categories' in our program. But, as regards the workers' state there is being evinced an inability to learn to approach it as a real historical fact which has not subordinated itself to our program."

Richard Brenner: Of course you have every right to disagree with him, Ray, but not to misrepresent his views.

Ray Rising: But don't you understand Trotsky is here paraphrasing somebody else's argument, someone else's definition - NOT HIS OWN formulation. A state cannot be simply 'only' the ruling administration (except perhaps the Vatican State) no more than the workers of any workers' state in Imperialist encirclement, can operate without their political management - in the transition from capitalism to communism via socialism.

Richard Brenner: Rubbish: he explicitly accepts the term as anyone reading the passage can see.

Ray Rising: "... This argument is based upon at least two misunderstandings. How and why could the interests of maintaining the nationalized property be in "conflict" with the interests of the world revolution? Tacitly you infer that the Kremlin's (not our) policy of defence can come into conflict with the interests of the world revolution. Of course! At every step! In every respect! However our policy of defence is not conditioned by the Kremlin's policy. This is the first misunderstanding. But, you ask, if there is not a conflict why the necessity of subordination? Here is the second misunderstanding. We must subordinate the defence of the USSR to the world revolution insofar as we subordinate a part to a whole. In 1918 in the polemics with Bukharin, who insisted upon a revolutionary war against Germany, Lenin answered approximately: "If there should be a revolution in Germany now, then it would be our duty to go to war even at the risk of losing. Germany's revolution is more important than ours and we should if necessary sacrifice the Soviet power in Russia (for a while) in order to help establish it in Germany." A strike in Chicago at this time could be unreasonable in and of itself, but if it is a matter of helping a general strike on the national scale, the Chicago workers should subordinate their interests to the interests of their class and call a strike. If the USSR is involved in the war on the side of Germany, the German revolution could certainly menace the immediate interests of the defence of the USSR. Would we advise the German workers not to act? The Comintern would surely give them such advice, but not we. We will say: "We must subordinate the interests of the defence of the Soviet Union to the interests of the world revolution." -<http://marxists.org/archive/trotsky/idom/dm/07-shachtman1.htm>

Ray Rising: No - he takes the 'term' only insofar as it enables him to dissect it, to subject it scientific socialist analysis and explain why it is and how it is a 'contradiction' of diction, of a concept. Which is 'in itself' of opposed interests of itself. Why am I amazed that people who would call themselves Trotskyists define the workers state by Stalinism - from whenever? - 1923 - 1939 - 1991?

Jason Rising: Andrew, not sure which part you're asking a source for....now here comes what I guess Robert was warning you...I'm a stubborn pedant, apologies in advance:

Richard gave a source for the "counterrevolutionary workers' state" formulation which has Ray riled up--as if my argument depends on that particular label in anyway.

On the workers' state question will be settled one way or another, see the part "The Present War and the Fate of Modern Society" in IDOM (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/idom/dm/dom.pdf>).

On Stalin and the bureaucracy recognizing the threat the war would pose to their rule, see Rogovin's work. Also, consider that before both world wars, bourgeois diplomats debated whether war should be avoided to prevent revolutions from breaking out--Stalin for all his limitations did have an idea of how to preserve himself and "saw" that

he had to purge the state in order to survive the social upheaval a war could unleash. There's a quote from Molotov after the war that I can't find where he says something along those lines.

Jason Rising: Ray wrote: *"Why did Stalin make a 'pact with Nazi Germany in 1939' - if not to protect the 'caste bureaucracies' position atop the workers state? Stalinism never purposely degenerated the workers' state to help Imperialism"*

The purges and pact allowed the bureaucracy a place in the imperialist system--taking back territory lost by the Tsar and Brest treaty. If the bureaucracy were simply concerned with its privileges within the workers' state, they would've done better not to kill off their military officers who would've done a much better job defending them from the German army. If the pact with Germany and Yalta agreement don't mirror what the Tsar wanted to do with and for imperialism in WW1, then I don't know what imperialism is.

Only a great social need could lead to a government decapitating its general staff on the eve of war.

Robert Rasta Robert: The problem w these debates from my experience as a state-capitalist theorist debating ortho trots is that the two sides are usually using vastly different criteria for what it means to be a workers' state. Until that is hashed out these debates tend to have a very circular nature.

Ray Rising: As I wasn't around at the time i.e., 1940, so I must defer to two other views who saw things from a 'distance' and close-up. The first is from Trotsky, then living in Mexico. The second, in another comment below, is from Leopold Trepper (head of what was to become the 'Red Orchestra' throughout Europe) from his 'cell' in Moscow <http://marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1940/xx/ww2.htm>

Ray Rising: "... Chapter Nine The Murder of the Red Army It was in the summer of 1937 that the Moscow papers announced the arrest of Marshal Mikhail Nikolaievich Tukhachevski and seven generals. These leaders of the Red Army, heroes of the civil war and old communists, had been accused of deliberately working for the defeat of the Soviet Union and paving the way for capitalism. The next day the whole world learned that Tukhachevski and Generals Iakir, Uborevich, Primakov, Eide-mann, Feldmann, Kork and Putna had been sentenced to death and executed. A ninth high-ranking officer, General Gamarnik, head of the political division of the army, had committed suicide. The Red Army was decapitated... By the end of May, 1937, the Tukhachevski file had found its way to Stalin's desk. The moustachioed Georgian had every reason to be satisfied. At his request, the Germans had provided him with all the material necessary for eliminating the man he had sworn to kill. In fact, Skoblin - I am still giving Giering's version - had not gone to see Heydrich on his own initiative. Stalin and Hitler had divided up the work : the first had had the idea for the plot, the second had carried it out. Stalin wanted to break the last organised force opposed to his policies ; Hitler was seizing an unexpected opportunity to decapitate the Red Army.." - <http://>

www.facebook.com/notes/ray-rising/excerpts-from-the-great-game-by-leopold-trepper/121240611238284

Jason Rising: Sedov it appears saw things similarly to how I do:

"A way out—insofar as it depends upon the bureaucracy—can only be found along the road to a new, even deeper reaction. By the attempt to annihilate Trotsky politically and by the assassinations of old Bolsheviks[,] Stalin wants to make the road to reaction much more secure for himself."

"The danger of war only intensifies the Bonapartist character of Stalinism."

"The corpses of Zinoviev and Kamenev must show to the world bourgeoisie that Stalin has broken with the revolution, and must testify to his loyalty and ability to lead a nation-state. The corpses of the old Bolsheviks must prove to the world bourgeoisie that Stalin has in reality radically changed his politics, that the men who entered history as the leaders of revolutionary Bolshevism, the enemies of the bourgeoisie,—are his enemies also. ... The world bourgeoisie can and must reckon with Stalin as a serious ally, as the head of a nation-state." [Churchill actually said stuff along the lines of: *"Now that Stalin's put the Trotskyites to the wall, we can work with him."*]

<http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/writers/sedov/works/red/ch01.htm>

Ray Rising: Given that Leon Sedov was Trotsky's son, it comes as no surprise of course to read of his outspoken indignation of Stalinism in his day, but for that, his words are found more suitably usable by Jason, in their limited critique because they are weighted more emotionally than that of the more developed scientific reasoning of his father. Sedov never had to lead the Red Army, and genetics have never transposed dialectical reasoning on war tactics or strategy from father to son let alone making him superior in presenting possible future revolutionary prognoses however general or broad their scope. It would seem my adversary on the wording of the top post, cares more for his saving face and pride, than ever admit it has revealed a false method. Marxism demands first of all - honesty - admitting where one is wrong.

Grac Chvs: I'll have to refer to my own post earlier in the thread: If you are to call the Soviet Union after WW2 capitalist, then you have to show what was fundamentally different. What made it a capitalist state as opposed to the workers state under Lenin. Again, I will assert that since there is no fundamental difference between the Soviet Union of 1990 and of 1922, that the only way to declare the Stalinist regime as a kind of 'state capitalist' is to focus on the fact that the wage relation remained, and that therefore the state acted as a kind of collective capitalist, and that this was just as true under Lenin (after the end of War Communism) in the period of workers' democracy. And that therefore, under the period of workers democracy, it was the working class itself that acted as a collective capitalist exploiting itself. If you follow that line of reasoning, then under Stalin, what changed? The political expropriation of the working class but not the creation of a new capital-

ist class. The only change was the political expropriation of the working class.

Following the rest of this thread, I will also cite IDOM:

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1939/09/ussr-war.htm>

"Are the Differences Political or Terminological?"

Let us begin by posing the question of the nature of the Soviet state not on the abstract sociological plane but on the plane of concrete political tasks. Let us concede for the moment that the bureaucracy is a new "class" and that the present regime in the USSR is a special system of class exploitation. What new political conclusions follow for us from these definitions? The Fourth International long ago recognized the necessity of overthrowing the bureaucracy by means of a revolutionary uprising of the toilers. Nothing else is proposed or can be proposed by those who proclaim the bureaucracy to be an exploiting "class." The goal to be attained by the overthrow of the bureaucracy is the reestablishment of the rule of the Soviets, expelling from them the present bureaucracy. Nothing different can be proposed or is proposed by the Leftist critics. [1] It is the task of the regenerated Soviets to collaborate with the world revolution and the building of a socialist society. The overthrow of the bureaucracy therefore presupposes the preservation of state property and of planned economy. Herein is the nub of the whole problem.

Needless to say, the distribution of productive forces among the various branches of economy and generally the entire content of the plan will be drastically changed when this plan is determined by the interests not of the bureaucracy but of the producers themselves. But inasmuch as the question of overthrowing the parasitic oligarchy still remains linked with that of preserving the nationalized (state) property, we called the future revolution political. Certain of our critics (Ciliga, Bruno, and others) want, come what may, to call the future revolution social. Let us grant this definition. What does it alter in essence? To those tasks of the revolution which we have enumerated it adds nothing whatsoever.

Our critics as a rule take the facts as we long ago established them. They add absolutely nothing essential to the appraisal either of the position of the bureaucracy and the toilers, or of the role of the Kremlin on the international arena. In all these spheres, not only do they fail to challenge our analysis, but on the contrary they base themselves completely upon it and even restrict themselves entirely to it. The sole accusation they bring against us is that we do not draw the necessary "conclusions." Upon analysis it turns out, however, that these conclusions are of a purely terminological character. Our critics refuse to call the degenerated workers' state - a workers' state. They demand that the totalitarian bureaucracy be called a ruling class. The revolution against this bureaucracy they propose to consider not political but social. Were we to make them these terminological concessions, we would place our critics in a very difficult position, inasmuch as they themselves would not know what to do with their purely verbal victory."

This was just as true in 1990 as in 1939 when he wrote it.

Jason Rising: What neither of you (Ray and Grac) have attempted to do or I doubt can do (as no deformed theorist has done it) is address the issue that's actually in the post--how did what you would have as a highly contradictory and therefore unstable state (Trotsky's image: a ball balanced on top of a pyramid) survive the world war not only intact but without significant trouble--when such events lead to social unrest and Trotsky for that reason said he did not think the regime could survive the war as it was?

Grac Chvs: I will be honest and state plainly that I don't know enough about that period of Soviet history to respond to that point. All I can do is raise the one point I always raise: Since there were no fundamental differences between the Soviet Union of 1990 and the regime issuing out of the Civil War except the absence of proletarian democracy, that if you call the Stalinist regime some variety of capitalism, then that characterisation must apply to the pre-Stalinist period as well (unless you are one who says that the end of War Communism represents the degeneration of the revolution and its overthrow. Are you?)

Ray Rising: I would agree with Jason that none of the parties, groups or individuals following the 2nd World War, has cogently explained the contradiction between what Trotsky had confidently forecast regarding the political revolution for the USSR in 1939-40, and what actually happened through and after the war itself. We can all picture the geometric symbols of ball and triangle, and the student may be 'objectively' swayed into idealistically interpreting the ball atop, purely in a formal 'gravitational' relation to the point itself and the slopes either side - that is not the way of political dialectics however, and certainly not of social relations within social being. So can we put away the analogous toys or symbols for a while. As I've understood Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky, they always premised their revolutionary outlooks on the ground of their confidence in 'both' the social and political revolutions - on the objective conditions of capitalism's crisis and the Marxist subjective role of revolutionary leadership to transform society itself - not just in form but in essence too - as continuity and permanence. Wars on the scale of 1914-18 and 1939-45 can and have created the objective conditions for revolution, but without the subjective factor of the revolutionary leadership they must fail.

We can say that despite the objective conditions - Germany did not achieve the socialist revolution in 1919 or '23 precisely because of that thing called leadership being sufficiently developed and imbued in the proletarian vanguard as to make the 'art of revolution' its method and result. Likewise, the political general strike in Britain in 1926, had the conditions but not the leadership - and it was thrown back as a result. Both of those critical examples can be laid at the door of the 2nd International and its 'reformism and centrism'. The 3rd Int. promised so much more - but what was the result of four years of civil war and Imperialist intervention in the USSR - so many of the best revolutionaries were spent and died defending

October's overturn that the tiredness and hunger stemming from that war demanded, yet occasioned both the NEP and simultaneously a certain laxity of revolutionism - the Thermidor began in earnest in little things but general things in national bureaucracy - in opening up political manoeuvring and opportunism but also tendencies to close the borders to International revolution. Anyone who has seriously read Lenin's last struggle ending in 1924 and of the enormous struggle waged by Trotsky through the 'left opposition' after Lenin's departure, would not be in any doubt as to the life and death nature it endured whilst pursuing opposition to the emerging and virtually all embracing Stalinism. As the years rolled by Stalinism cut down and severed all threads to Bolshevism, both participants and method, and this caused the rupture that grew between itself and the socialised ownership of the means of production and thereby the proletariat itself - and of those - the best, the indifferent and the worst.

Today, the Russian state, as did the Stalinist state officialdom of USSR in 1945, refer to the 2nd WW as the 'great patriotic war' and not as an Imperialist War. The cost was enormous for all sides - but Eastern Europe was by far the biggest loser in military and civilian casualties. How do we measure the effects that the wartime somersaults of Stalinism had accrued from 1939-45 in particular, to the even prior tenuous connectivity to Bolshevism - the need for rest and consolidation by the war weary masses - for buffer states of geographical separation from 'enemies who had become allies - and who suddenly were enemies again' - this was not conducive to political revolution at home - unless the peoples on the other side of the iron curtain were ready to make their own social revolution perhaps. But Stalinism and Social Democracy in the west was not really ready for revolution - but rest too - to rebuild both infrastructure and parliamentarism in national theatres. Now economics and rebuild became the order of the day a Marshall Plan- Bretton Woods/IMF in the west and an eastern market of Comecon was about to develop - and then the oil industry and wider civilian use, post colonialism India, Egypt and Palestine/Israel and then China and the 'peacetime' war industrial complexes I shall comment further when and after others may have questions or points of their own.

John Vermazen: Its somewhat silly to claim nothing separates the USSR from 1921 to 1990. All that reveals is one's education on Soviet political economy comes only out of Trotskyist texts divorced from any empirical or serious treatments.

John Vermazen: In my opinion, the dictatorship of the proletariat occurs while the capitalist mode of production still exists. In Marx, the "social revolution" is the entire transformative transition bridging the capitalist and socialist/communist/associated [epochal] modes of production. It is not identical with the "seizure of power" by the working-class. It is ironic Trotskyists so fetishise the nationalization and politicization of key aspects of the national political economy, considering this was not part of the program for Red October, and did not issue forth from the political revolution then organically.

Grac Chvs: I actually responded to that argument in my first post, John:

"The only fundamental difference between the USSR of 1990, and the Soviet Russia of 1918 is the lack of political democracy for the working class. If the Soviet Union under Stalin is declared to be some variety of capitalist, that's fine, but at least be consistent with it. To say that, means to say that the working class took power, abolished the bourgeoisie, and became a kind of collective capitalist. So the October Revolution, in that sense, merely established the capitalist exploitation of the working class BY the working class. The workers state, therefore, was a capitalist. Nevertheless, there was no new ruling class under the rule of Stalin, so that state capitalist, therefore, was still a workers' state. At the end of the war, and for the next 45 years after it, there were no fundamental changes."

John Vermazen: Trotsky's arguments for why the bureaucracy cannot be a ruling class are completely unconvincing. By those arguments the Sino-centric pre-capitalist world in the East had no ruling class, since it consisted of examination degree holders who possessed official offices.

Grac Chvs: If you say that my view that there were no major differences, and claim that my education is lacking, but go no further, that's empty. It might be true, but it's empty and stupid and means absolutely nothing because you haven't explained why my position is wrong.

John Vermazen: First of all the political economy of the Soviet regime changed dramatically throughout those periods. It only does not if one clings to whatever the juridical characterization of the large-scale property-forms is. Sure, the Bolshevik regime centralized control of the economy in 1918-19 under "war communism" to defeat the Whites, and the concentrated forms of production remained juridically formally owned by the State en toto actually to 1991-3.

But formal juridical right hardly is the over-determinant of the mode of production: the State owned most major factors of production in the Islamic social formations, China, etc. before capitalism.

John Vermazen: Today the Russian state and the informally constituted statist elite behind it retains control over the Russian economy...the commanding heights are either directly owned by the state (Gazprom) or controlled by state officials formally privately but in actual fact subject to political controls. Much of the rest of the economy remains subject to state orders or intertwined institutionally with state officialdom: for instance Russian factory directors are successfully able to resist dependence on "free market" relations own control over 'their' enterprise. It could be said that Russia is the society where the form of real social relations and social reproduction on the ground floor of the society is least explained with reference to the face value of the juridical claims, or where the juridical face of social relations most obscures or misleads one about how things actually occur at the ground floor of the social formation.

September 28

COMMUNIST UNIVERSITY 2012

By Laurence Humphries and Gerry Downing

These are my observations of the Communist University held from 20th to 26th August. I and other Socialist Fight members intervened in the debates of the Communist University. On Monday evening we discussed Israelis and Iranians against the War—in this debate Moshe Machover and Yassamine Mather both presented their views on the current situation in the Middle East. Moshe insisted that he disagreed with Lenin that Imperialism is not the highest stage of Capitalism. They both considered Iran a “Reactionary form of Anti Imperialism”, Yassamine insisted that the Iranian leaders were really anti-western and don’t support the Palestinian movement. They both insisted that Syria is the only ally in the region. Syria is important in that the Ba’athist regime is involved in the battle against Imperialism and their stooges in the Free Syrian Army and the so called opposition which is directed by Imperialism. A failure to understand these movements means that you end up supporting Imperialism as the fake Trotskyist group the AWL does.

Yassamine insisted that it is not the Arab Spring, referring to the movements in Egypt and other countries. She insisted that Iran’s rulers are dogmatic and infected by Shi’a Ideology, insisting that Iran wants the war. The Zionist state of Israel the Imperialist agent in the Middle East wants to go to war with Iran. It is a complicated and corrupt regime. Yassamine advocated No to Theocracy, No to War.

The comments from the floor revealed the CPGB the organisers of this event to be Liberals pacifists and a refusal to support Iran against Imperialism. On the question of whether you oppose your own Bourgeoisie, some comrades felt it doesn’t matter whether we oppose our own bourgeoisie or not. They stated that a defeat of Imperialism will not strengthen the working class. At this point I interjected to explain the situation regarding the struggle against Imperialism. The task is to defeat your own bourgeoisie and in Britain that is Imperialism. On Syria and Iran you have to defend those regimes that are fighting Imperialism. There is no middle path for anyone, to constantly take up a pacifist position on the war is to fail to understand that you are lining up with the Imperialists. Lenin and Trotsky were very clear about this situation. You have to defend colonial countries against Imperialism. It is the position that Trotsky took with relation to Chiang Kai Chek in China. Both in Syria and Iran which have Bonapartist capitalist regimes the task is still to defend these regimes against Imperialism and recognise like Libya that the so called People’s Front opposing Assad are the tools of Imperialism. There are Imperialist agents mercenaries and the like whose role is to make both Syria and Iran safe for Imperialism and that means regime change. The task is to defend these regimes at all costs.

On Wednesday morning Paul Le Blanc, an American Trotskyist, talked about building the Revolutionary Party in the USA. He explained that he had

been a member of the American SWP and then they had split from the SWP to form the 4th Internationalist Tendency which he later left to join the ISO. He stated that Marx and Engels had explained the role of consciousness in the working class and this was at a low ebb. He explained that after 1945 there was a break and the SWP was isolated from the working class. In the 1960s and 1970s these would be Leninists made an industrial turn and then later turned to the women’s, and anti-racist work, forsaking work in the working class. He felt that a Trotskyist movement needed to be open and have factions who could fight the majority.

In the discussion many of the CPGB felt it their duty to criticise Trotskyist organisations that were bureaucratic centralist as they referred to them, they even went so far as to accuse them of being worse than the Communist Party. I spoke about the need to look at the role of the trade union bureaucracy. The CPGB is concerned with bureaucratic centralist organisations like the SWP, SPEW Awl and Workers Power but it does not concern itself with working in the trade union movement to fight and expose the bureaucracy and drive them out as stated by Lenin in Left Wing Communism and Trotsky in the Transitional Programme.

My concern is that if revolutionaries do not intervene against the bureaucracy then the field is left to them. I know about bureaucratic centralism, I was in the Healy organisation (WRP) for a number of years but the task now is to fight to build a Rank and File Organisation in the trade unions. Grassroots Left is such an organisation. There is no doubt that the SPEW and the SWP are drawing closer and closer to the bureaucracy particularly its left variety.

I was disappointed with Le Blanc’s presentation. He never really presented a history of the SWP, particularly the Cannon years and how he and Muste and others broke with Stalinism to form the Communist League, Cannon’s involvement in the IWW and the great industrial battles of the 1930s in Minneapolis particularly the wartime trial of the Trotskyist leaders and their work in the Teamsters which Farrell Dobbs has written about.

The current Jack Barnes leadership of the SWP of course led to its liquidation and its move away from its working class roots but there was no discussion of this aspect. I think it is central to our work to penetrate in the trade unions and win a layer of workers to Trotskyism. Le Blanc mentioned the Occupy Movement in Oakland, that was very useful but it is to the working class that we must turn.

On Thursday afternoon Hillel Ticktin from the Critique journal talked about the triumph and maturity of capitalism. Ticktin said that the overcoming of abstract labour, there was controversy of the nature of capitalism and the market will always be there. He explained how the commodity rules and how the rate of profit must fall. He reiterated what Marx said about capitalism be on



They both considered Iran a “Reactionary form of Anti Imperialism”, Yassamine (above) insisted that the Iranian leaders were really anti-western and don’t support the Palestinian movement.

the way out. Socialist Fight members did not agree at all with Hillel Ticktin’s assertion that the crisis of capitalism today was due to debt and not the falling rate of profit.

Gerry Downing from Socialist Fight disagreed with Ticktin’s analysis that nationalism was not important. He insisted it was because many semi-colonial capitalist nations were oppressed by American Imperialism; there were oppressed and oppressing nations. The contradiction between wage labour and capital found its expression in the four forms of alienation under capitalism. This was the material basis for bourgeois Ideology, not simply the mass media and miseducation. The trade union bureaucracy adapted to nationalism; Bob Crowe argued for British Jobs for British workers by implicitly blaming bad Germans for the loss of train-building jobs in Derby. I echoed Gerry’s points by pointing out that the bureaucracy is the reflection of Imperialism in the workers’ movement and the task is to root it out by establishing a Rank and File movement.

Gerry Downing adds: In other debates CPGB leader Jack Conrad insisted that the development of mono-theism was not historically progressive and did not ideologically prepare the minds of humanity for atheism and the end of class society via the socialist revolution. I had made this claim and pointed that historical materialism showed that when pantheism developed, i.e. God in everything rather than the Judeo-Christian anthropomorphic (human-like) God, then it was only a small step to replace this with nature. “Old Spinoza’s was quite right” said Engels when asked if the mind and what it sees are one substance, seeing the progressive side of pantheism. Conrad’s post hoc ergo propter hoc non sequitur was that the fall of the Roman Empire following the adoption of Christianity negated all this.

Finally Chris Knight ‘lost it’ when I pointed out that the primitive communism of the hunter-gatherer societies involved frequent wars and not a little barbarism. “What books have you read on this subject?” he shouted purple-faced in my face as if to say, “how dare an ignorant peasant like you challenge me? I am the world’s greatest anthropologist and expert on the part played by the female menstrual cycle in humanity’s evolution.”

I was forced to ask him to Foxtrot Oscar.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!

International day of action

The following statement was received from the O/C of the republican prisoners of war in Maghaberry Gaol, Co Antrim, in October 2012:

We, the republican prisoners of war incarcerated in Maghaberry prison camp, wish to send greetings to those assembled all over the world today protesting on our behalf. At present we are engaged in a 'dirty protest' to end the archaic practice of strip-searching and 23-hour lock-down, and to secure conditions befitting of prisoners of war. The age-old British policy of criminalisation of Irish republican prisoners is in full swing in Maghaberry and as always we, as republicans, will oppose this in any way we can.

We have been on this current phase of protest now for over 18 months and we see little movement from our captors. The conditions we endure are far from humane or acceptable,

yet we will continue in our struggle until our demands are met. We have a duty to all republicans and to those prisoners who may follow us.

We find ourselves incarcerated due to British rule in Ireland and are part of the broader struggle for Irish independence. We take heart that Irish republicanism is alive and vibrant, kept alive by people like you. As republican prisoners of war we will not shy away from our duty and we salute all those in Ireland and abroad who work towards the independence of Ireland by any means necessary.

The support we have received from those across the world makes us more determined and resolute. We are indeed grateful, and ask for your continued support and activism on our behalf. We applaud those of you who take to the streets all over the world in protest at the detention of true republicans.

We will continue to resist all attempts by the British government to criminalise us and our



IRPSG members picket the Ministry of Justice on 27 October, the International day of Action for Irish republican political prisoners.

struggle and, with your continued support, we are confident of victory. Onwards to the republic!

International Coordination Committee

Letter to the Irish Post

Dear Editor,

I went on Sunday 28th October to St Georges Cathedral, Southwark for the Terence MacSwiney Memorial organised by the Cork Association of London. The mass was beautiful, and the beginning of the meeting in the hall was lovely, but then they read out letters from The Taoiseach, The President of Ireland and the Fianna Fail leader, all supporting the planting of 2 trees in the park nearby in his memory, as Terence was a Sinn Fein member and Lord Mayor of Cork, and no letter from Sinn Fein was sent and no Sinn Fein representative was there to speak.

Also, near the end of the meeting, one of the leaders read out a letter to the Queen of England, telling her thanks for coming to Cork etc and that they were planting trees in the park, now Terence was a

Republican and would not want any royalty involved in his memorial, let alone any letter sent to a Queen with his name involved. I was the only person to put their hand up against the letter, my fellow comrades walked out in disgust, and I felt like I was being looked down upon by those who agreed to the letter, this was disgraceful. There was no mention of his hunger strike and why it happened, and that he did not choose to come to Southwark, also during the planting of the trees, the Deputy Mayor of Southwark did not know who he was and talked about her own cultures problems, and finally a council member kept referring to 'Frank' MacSwiney, his name was Terence and always will be.

Regards and please can we show respect next time to a true hero and Irish Republican.

Pól Antóin Ó Flaitile

IRPSG to visit Derry for Bloody Sunday 2013

The Irish Republican Prisoners Support Group will be visiting Derry again this year for the Bloody Sunday Commemoration. Three members are already pledged to go. We will work out the cost later but it was quite cheap in 2012; we stayed in a hostel, Paddy's Place, for £10 a night! We aim to go on Saturday and come back on Monday. Contact us at, irpsgroup@gmail.com if you would like to travel with us.

In January 2012 the organisers specified no political speeches but Kate Nash made a very political "non-political" speech. She spoke of the intimidation and threats to her and the other march organisers attempting to prevent the march going ahead. She defended the Irish republican political prisoners very strongly and the other campaigns for justice. She said,

"I am delighted with the turnout. The march should remain an annual event to help lobby for other bereaved families seeking justice. But even if it had just been myself and my sister, we would

still have a right to march. That is democracy. We are going to continue to march for prosecutions, but beyond that, this is a unique march and it should continue for all those who are seeking justice. I haven't fallen out with any of the families who are not with us today - I respect their decision not to attend and I'm sure they in turn respect my decision to march. My hope is that this march will continue to highlight many other injustices perpetrated against innocent people wherever they might be and wherever they might be. They too are entitled to justice for their loved ones."

Michael Bridge said: "I was one of the 27 people shot on that day and, unlike 13 others, I survived. I'm marching to make the point that justice for the victims is still outstanding. The unfinished business can only be ended when the soldiers involved in that nightmare day are charged and prosecuted for their actions. Until that happens, this campaign for justice for me goes on."

Michael said he was adamant that because Lord Saville had judged that three soldiers had per-



Linda Nash laying the wreath in 2012 for the 14 victims in Derry.

Bloody Sunday March for Justice



Sunday 27 January 2013

All Groups and Bands are welcome to attend

jured themselves during the Inquiry they had therefore lost their immunity given on the basis that they told the truth and should now be charged with murder. He had consulted the public records office and ascertained the names of these soldiers, including the name of the soldier who had shot him.

Ivan Cooper supported the March and the earlier commemoration and Fionnbarra O'Dochartaigh made the offer to come over for the presentation to Terry Gavin (which he did) in the pub after we had shown him and Kate Nash photos of her on our picket lines.

Leon Trotsky: I am confident of the victory of the Fourth International; Go Forward!